Spain Forgets Franco *Tad Szulc*

THE NEW REPUBLIC

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John Osborne

Frisco Blues
T.D. Allman

Zurich Gnomes
Charles Fenyvesi

People's Banks
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Burton & Humphrey
The Editors

BOOKS ON SLAVERY
Reviews by Arnold Rampersad, Al-Tony Gilmore, John W. Blassingame
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TRB

from Washington ®
December 4, 1976

Inside-Out

Hamilton Jordan, Jimmy Carter's young campaign manager, has been falling all over himself apologizing for telling *Playboy* that the Carter administration would have failed and he would quit if Cyrus Vance became Secretary of State and Zbigniew Brzezinski became head of the National Security Council staff.

He says he chose poor examples in making the point that Carter would bring fresh faces into the government, since both men are under serious consideration for high-level jobs.

The time for guessing what Carter is going to do will soon be past. In another two or three weeks we should begin finding out whether Carter's outsider stance and anti-Washington line during the campaign were no more than a gimmick to appeal to a public fed up with the old crowd or whether he actually will bring a lot of outsiders into his administration.

Jordan said he expected the new Secretary of the Treasury would come from inside the financial community and would serve as a bridge to the business world. This sounded like another hint that Carter was backing away from the anti-establishment approach of his campaign.

A sign that pointed in the opposite direction was Carter's list of 11 persons described as representative of those who would be advising him on appointments. First on the list was the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame University and former chairman of the US Commission on Civil Rights. Father Hesburgh is no stranger to Washington, but he brings with him a gale of fresh air, whether the issue is chronic discrimination against American citizens or chronic disregard for the interests of the peoples of underdeveloped nations.

Another in the group was a Jacksonville, Mississippi manufacturer who is a former moderator of the Southern Baptist Convention. The list included not the usual lone black, but *three* blacks. Four on the list were women. And there wasn't a single big-name Washington WASP lawyer, Ivy League professor or pillar of the Council on Foreign Relations.

For the record, here are the others: Lucy W. Benson, former president of the League of Women Voters; Lane Kirkland, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO; Vernon Jordan, executive director of the Urban League; Carol Foreman, executive director of the Consumer Federation of America; Marion Wright Edelman, executive director of the Children's Defense Fund; Robert Strauss, chairman of the Democratic National Committee; Hank La Coya, chairman of the Hispanic division of the Carter-Mondale campaign; Owen Cooper, the Mississippi businessman and lay religious leader; Irving Shapiro, chairman of the board of E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. and chairman of the Business Roundtable and Patricia Roberts Harris, chairman of the 1972 Democratic Credentials Committee.

If Carter worries about his narrow margin of victory and develops an early preoccupation with winning reelection in 1980, he won't pay much attention to the advice he gets from people like that. If this happens, he will more likely look to the American establishment for advice in making appointments.

That was part of John F. Kennedy's trouble. Although he had written *Profiles in Courage*, he took the path of caution after being elected by a similarly close vote. The day after the election, he announced that he would keep J. Edgar Hoover as head of the FBI and Allen Dulles as head of the CIA.

Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. suggested afterward that Kennedy knew better but considered the two men unassailable. But it was only eight days later that Dulles broke the news to Kennedy that plans for the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba were already well underway. The trouble that Hoover and Dulles later made for Kennedy outweighed any political advantage he obtained by reassuring their admirers and taking them into his administration.

When Kennedy looked for suggestions for the top jobs in his administration, he went to the safety of the American establishment and offered one of its leaders, Robert A. Lovett, his choice of the three top cabinet jobs—State, Defense or the Treasury.

When Lovett turned him down, Kennedy took his advice in naming Dean Rusk as Secretary of State and Robert McNamara as Secretary of Defense. Their most lasting contributions were to lead first Kennedy and then Lyndon Johnson into the Vietnam war. What is more, Kennedy was so trusting that he decided on Rusk without checking sufficiently to find out about a long and close relationship between Rusk and John Foster Dulles, the Secretary of State in the Eisenhower administration. Instead of innovation, Kennedy was endorsing continuation.

Choosing outsiders and fresh faces doesn't necessarily mean avoiding anyone over 50 and anyone who has been working in Washington. There are some old Washington hands who have always been outsiders. Not that Mike Mansfield is looking for work, but he displayed his independence and youthfulness of spirit when he returned from China and urged bluntly that the United States break relations with Taiwan, abrogate the American defense commitments and get on with establishing full diplomatic relations with Peking.

However Carter proceeds, the old order already has changed profoundly and will go on changing. The Council on Foreign Relations has some influential rivals, notably Thomas R. Hughes' complex of foreign policy operations at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

A membership movement called New Directions, modeled after Common Cause and headed by former Gov. Russell W. Peterson of Delaware, will be lobbying on foreign affairs issues.

Farther out, Sanford Gottlieb at SANE has been pressing for effective arms control and disarmaments, and Morton Halperin at the Project on National Security and Civil Liberties has been documenting what he accurately calls "the crimes of the US intelligence agencies."

Jimmy Carter campaigned as a spokesman for the outsiders. He can be their leader if he chooses.

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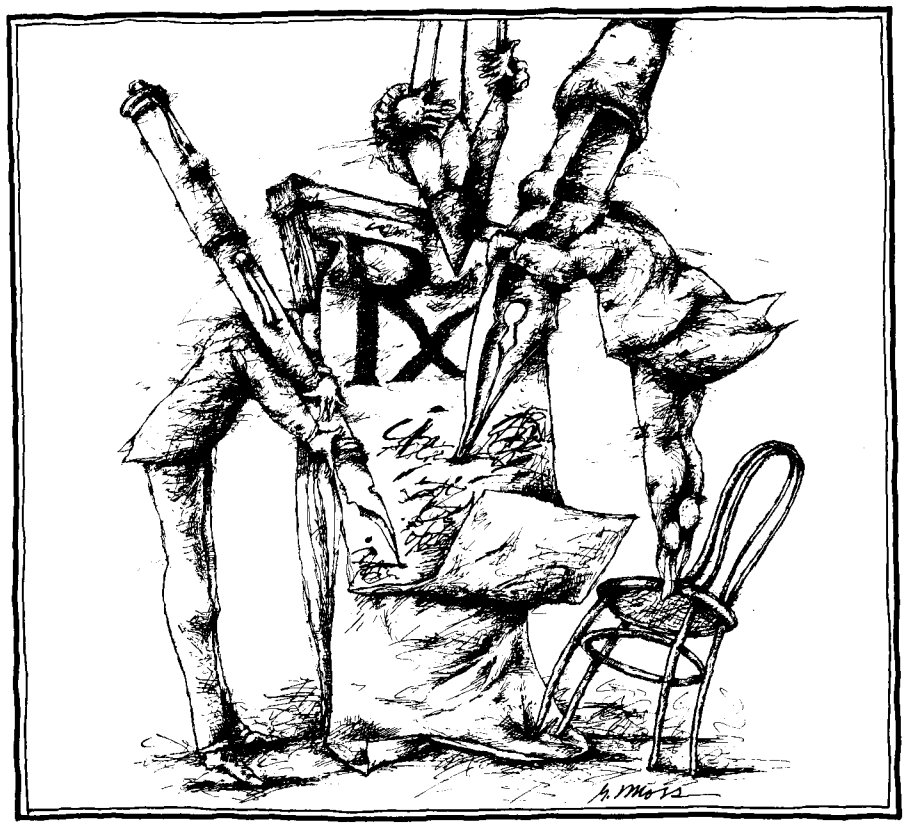

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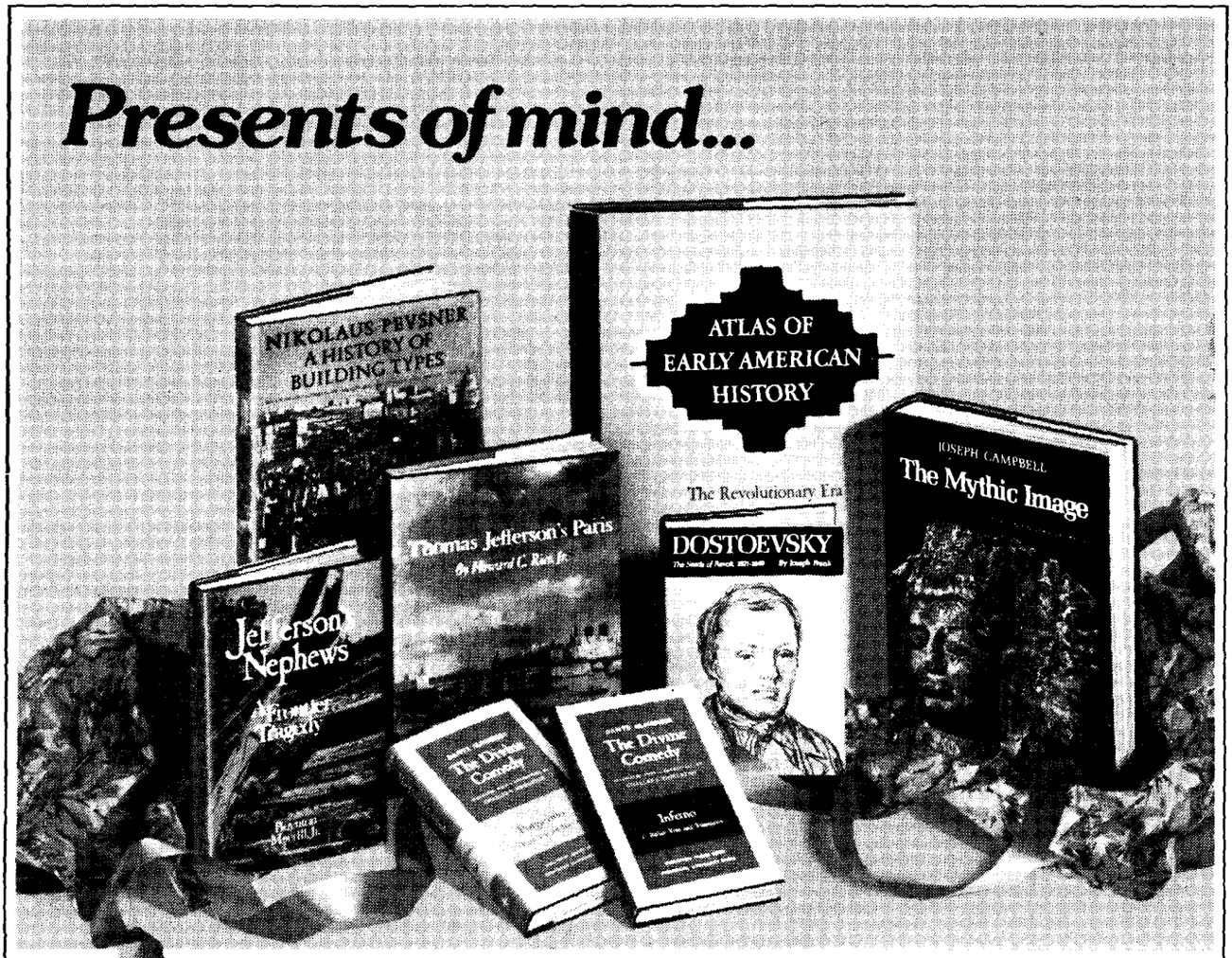

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Choosing Leaders

It is Jimmy Carter's fortune—and also the nation's—that in governing the country he will have as his partner an overwhelmingly Democratic Congress. This does not mean that the House and Senate will be pliant, and it is a good thing that they will not be. In recent years, the legislative branch has been reasserting its proper constitutional functions, and doing this against the accumulated habits of an over-expansive presidency. Nothing is now likely to reverse this process. Congress will jealously preserve its newly re-established prerogatives with the fierceness of the territorial imperative. But Congress is not a constitutional abstraction. Nor is it simply the sum of all its members. Congress has an identity and a distinctive political role of its own. That role, for better or worse, is determined by the character of its leaders.

Because our attention had been fixed for at least four years on the usurpations of one President and his aides—and before that on the executive war in Vietnam—we have probably come to underestimate the power that Congress always wielded. With a formal structure and a tradition that vested enormous authority in the independent baronies of a few committee chairmen, Congress often exercised its power negatively—as an impediment to social change and an obstacle to popular scrutiny of foreign and military policy. This was especially true when a Democrat sat in the White House. But there was a paradox: when a President pushed for progressive legislation, he would often face a Congress implacably obstinate; when he pushed into foreign adventure, the same Congress would become docile and supine. If this stark contradiction is not of our time, but of yesterday's, the extent to which it remains in the past depends less on procedural reforms adopted by the House and Senate than on the character of the people at the helm.

The Carter presidency, we think, requires tough and tough-minded liberal leadership in Congress, for at least two reasons. The first is the most important: every President needs reliable allies. It would be hard to overestimate this precondition for effective government. But it is magnified now by the growing perception that the US and the other industrialized countries may not be on the arc of an economic upturn but on the brink of another terrible recession. Will the leadership share Carter's commitment to break out of the alternating cycles of

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high unemployment and high inflation rates? Or will it resist change and lapse into that parsimony and timidity that obscures human suffering behind impersonal statistics and economic indices?

Strong leadership is needed secondly because the President will require of his associates in Congress more than mere cooperation, although it would be nice to think that is all that he will need. We do not prejudge Carter's performance in office; the coalition of voters that elected him should predispose him—as his own instincts may—to a program as bold as his predecessor's was reticent. Given the way power is held in our society, however, Jimmy Carter will be the target of enormous pressure to deal with these issues as Presidents traditionally have: that is, symbolically—a method that makes every situation appear momentarily desperate, but never leads to serious or enduring change. Such evasions will no longer suffice; they will deepen rather than relieve the national distress. What Jimmy Carter should have at his side is a congressional phalanx itself identified with the most progressive aims of his Democratic constituency. From elsewhere within his entourage, and perhaps from his intuition as a politician, there will be enough drive to conciliate the right. But rhetoric does not appease those whose concerns revolve around wealth and privilege. Thus, a liberal leadership in the House and Senate must serve as a counterforce, not only to the timorous conservatism of the entrenched bureaucracy, but to the purposeful, grasping conservatism of many in the corporate sector. The congressional leadership should have the inner confidence of its own convictions, moreover, so that it can also be a prod to the President himself.

The Senate Democrats will meet next January to elect the majority leader, and they will choose as Mike Mansfield's successor Ernest Hollings of South Carolina, the present Whip Robert Byrd of West Virginia or Hubert Humphrey. It should not be held against the first two contenders that they are Southerners at a time when there will be a Southerner in the White House. What does count is that they have not been recognized as leaders for the ideas and programs that have confirmed the Democrats as the great majority party in most state houses in the country and in Congress. One need not dwell on Byrd's especially loyal service to the entrenched interests in weighing the candidates: it is plain that Hubert Humphrey represents the Democratic party's most humane self. Neither political disappointment nor illness has diminished his energies or daunted his will. Humphrey is, his critics say, long-winded; that is true. But he has a lot to say, much of it learned, some of it wise, all of it motivated by a passion for making democracy real in the lives of ordinary Americans. On arms control, on civil rights, on a host of economic matters, few legislators have been so consistently at the cutting edge of the effort to make society more decent. Liberal senators who turn from him now will have a very difficult time justifying their decision.

In our view, the choice for majority leader in the House is at least as clear. The present leader, Tip O'Neill of Massachusetts, is the unopposed candidate for Speaker, and his successor will be chosen on December 6. Four congressmen are in contention: James Wright of Texas, an honest conservative who might administer but would not lead; John J. McFall of California who, as whip, has given his colleagues no reasons to move him up their ladder; Richard Bolling of Missouri, long identified as an advocate of structural reform in the House; and Phillip Burton of California, who alone among the aspirants deserves to be thought of as a fighting liberal.

Bolling is a haughty man, a trait which by itself might augur ill for his stewardship. Along with Burton's other opponents, Bolling was a tenacious supporter of the American adventure in Vietnam. His liberalism is largely procedural rather than substantive, and it does not often extend to foreign policy. But Burton has credits and virtues independent of the failings of his competition.

There is no one in the House who saw earlier or more clearly than Burton the moral and political disaster of the US involvement in the Indochina war. And he saw these bitter truths in the perspective of a comprehensive view of what the American role in international affairs can and should be. He dealt the Un-American Activities Committee the blow that consigned it to the oblivion it deserved, and this effort was a manifestation of his feel for the fragility of the people's freedom. Burton has been chairman of both the Democratic Study Group and the House Democratic Caucus; and in each post he demonstrated that he can effect change in what Brandeis called the "concrete problems of practical justice." No one better justifies the hopes now resting with Congress than Phil Burton. His talents are undeniable; and the causes for which he fights, and on which he would be at once an ally and spur to Jimmy Carter, are the ones that most need attention.

Holy Land of Finance

Zurich's New Gnomes

Zurich

It is Monday morning, and banks are open for business.

A pudgy man in a pin-stripe suit who must be at least a vice president gets up to assist a client: a portly Vietnamese in an impeccable coffee-colored suit of the latest European cut that shines like silk. His French and his gestures are courtly—pre-Ho Chi-minh City, pre-US intervention, pre-Diem. He might have been a

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merchant prince or a member of Bao Dai's cabinet. He pockets a sheaf of 500 franc notes after a cursory examination and disappears in the cushions of a white Mercedes Benz driven by another Oriental.

The next customer receiving special attention is also from Southeast Asia. Her lilting colonial English and heavy silks suggest Indonesia or Burma; her features betray European admixture. I cast her as a former girlfriend of Sukarno. Her beauty has the cold perfection of the lotus, the more fascinating because the edges have begun to fray. She is driven away in a small, nondescript English car by an elderly man who does not look like her father.

The third customer for some post-weekend cash is an Arab in his 30s dressed in gray English flannels. He is accompanied by two Swiss; the conversation suggests that they have recently become business partners. They drive off separately—the Swiss in Volvos, the Arab in a yellow Maserati that still has Lebanese license plates.

Switzerland is a safe haven from wars, social unrest and revolutions; the permanency of its wealth is as solid as India's poverty. It is a country that thrives on turmoil beyond its borders. This past year, untold millions in Italian, Lebanese and white African capital has poured into Zurich banks. People say that every coup in Africa is followed by some of the losers—or surviving members of their families—appearing at the doorsteps of villas prudently purchased while still in positions of power and influence. Oil sheikhs fly in just to make deposits or to consult with their bankers about new investments. Zurich is the rich man's Mount Ararat; the Holy Land of Finance.

At a dinner party given by and for engineers, the talk is of bids for airport construction in Africa, contracts for traffic and pollution control devices in Italy, plans for tunnels and overpasses in Germany and Austria. Communist bloc nations are also buying Swiss technology and consultant time. "The Communists realize that they cannot move ahead without West European machinery and know-how," a middle-aged Swiss businessman tells me. "They know that they are far behind us, and we are being wined and dined. At the same time, the Russians are spending far more money on subversion in Western Europe than ever before. They are funding organizations, all kinds of organizations through all kinds of channels, and they are generous. When someone like myself asks them why they back irresponsible people, they say, half in jest: 'We won't bury you, don't worry. We'll buy you out.' " (At lunch, a highly-placed East European tells me of an increasingly vocal opposition in Russia to "expensive" and "dangerous" ventures in Africa and Asia. The Brezhnev leadership is on the defensive, he says. India, Angola and Iraq are touted as examples of Soviet success, better ties with Libya are cited at party meetings. But if Syria moves closer to the United States, or if there are other conspicuous setbacks in the Mideast, the Brezhnev group might get into serious trouble.)

The Big Apple is the Arab East. "The best Swiss argument is quality," a structural engineer explains. "We tell the Saudis and the Kuwaitis and the Omanis that we are more expensive than the others but that we build better, and our products are better. And they take our bids, saying: 'We don't care about money. We want the best there is.' "

"It's like the Spice Trade or the Gold Rush," a historically-minded architect argues. "Westerners are making fortunes in Arab countries out of building wharves and selling manufacturing plants for toothpaste, lightbulbs, hot dogs—anything. But who is going to operate and maintain what we build? Can computers do everything? And do the Arabs have enough technicians to service computers? Or are they going to import on a large-scale expensive Western technical labor the way we import cheap manual labor from Italy, Yugoslavia and Turkey? How long can their political systems stay unaffected by such heavy infusions of Western people and ideas and ways? Then, are we not going to be dependent on their contracts? And, finally, what kind of a world are we building for ourselves?"

A building contractor who says he has "served time in Saudi Arabia" talks about a Saudi proposal that construction and maintenance be done by remote control by computers and satellites, TV and telex. The contractor says that there are projects under way to minimize if not eliminate the need for Westerners to be on the factory site or even in Jeddah or Riyadh.

On a sightseeing boat going around Lake Zurich, there is hardly a native aboard. There are the inevitable Japanese tourists with their cameras. Three Jews from New York discuss reports that Switzerland is thinking of membership in the UN. They come to the conclusion that it would be better not to have the UN at all; why should the Communists, the Arabs and Third World states have such a convenient forum for their propaganda? (A thoughtful African diplomat offered me a bet the other day: Black African states will begin to normalize relations with Israel this winter, with Kenya and Senegal most likely to break the ice. A new and probably drastic oil price increase might be used to justify the move.) Two Russian émigrés living in France almost come to blows over Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, who lived in Zurich: is he a medievalist, a bigot and a fool, or is he the great writer of the generation and the conscience of Russia? An American university professor talks about his sociological research, funded by a giant US foundation, conducted in a remote Romanian village. His political analysis is that collectivization works because living conditions and cultural standards have risen but that no one can tell for sure what the villagers' children, most of whom admire the West and many of whom are college-educated, will

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think and do. An Australian geologist, who is suspiciously sophisticated about politics and history, talks about the strength of nationalism in the Balkans. The American sociologist agrees; so do I.

Above us, in a glass cubicle, the Swiss captain is piloting the little boat over the placid waters of the Zurichsee. The boat stops every 10 minutes in little townships and villages. He does not call out their names; a tape recorder does that. I try to get some information from him. He mumbles in the Swiss dialect of German and points to the sign that says, in German, French, Italian and English: Do Not Disturb the Captain.

Charles Fenyvesi

Mr. Fenyvesi is a Washington journalist.

White House Watch

Jimmy and Jerry

When President Gerald R. Ford and President-elect James E. Carter—okay, he'll be Jimmy here from now on—emerged from their first meeting at the White House in the chilly dusk of November 22, it was as if the pain of defeat and of the impending departure from power would never end for Mr. Ford and his people. While Carter spoke of his "deep appreciation to President Ford for the gracious way in which he has welcomed me," the President stared straight ahead and was seen to swallow once and then again. Several members of the White House staff stood to the right of the vanquished and the victor: Richard Cheney with a caricature of a smile, John Marsh and Mike Duval with faces set as if frozen in grief. David Hume Kennerly, the President's photographer and a fellow never noted for humility, stood far to the rear and let one of his assistants, Ricardo Thomas, take the big picture as Ford and Carter walked out of the Oval Office. Press Secretary Ron Nessen, winding up the long sad day in the White House press room, was visibly closer to breaking up than he'd been since the election as he dealt with the usual flow of idiotic questions (why hadn't the Fords invited the Carters to dinner, for instance; it had been announced that Mrs. Carter was flying back to Georgia that night and that the President-elect would go home the next afternoon after a round of meetings with congressmen and senators).

Why the sadness and disappointment should have persisted for so long—20 days had passed since the defeat, after all—was a mystery that the close result did not explain. Mr. Ford was said by associates to have pretty well pulled himself together during his eight days of golf and privacy in Palm Springs. Some of his assistants, particularly the ones at the top of his staff and therefore burdened with a heavy sense of responsibility for the defeat, went through days of traumatic self-questioning but were through that phase when the President returned to Washington. According to them, his inner hurt was obvious at such public moments as his farewell to Carter in a way that it wasn't in his dealings with them. With them, they said, he was notably cool, collected, assured. His instructions to them and through them—principally Cheney and John Marsh—to some 35 transition officers in departments and agencies who were assigned to deal with the Carter transition teams were to do all in their power to meet what the President called on the 22nd "my obligation and the obligation of those who work with me" to make the change of administrations as smooth and efficient as possible. Every major unit of the federal government was ordered to prepare transition books for the incomers, setting forth in clear terms the main problems and issues presently facing the incumbents and likely to face the new people. The first office to produce the required book was Vice President Rockefeller's; the second was the Civil Service Commission; and Secretary of the Treasury William Simon delivered his department's book to the President-elect in person.

There were relieving touches on the occasion of the Ford-Carter meeting. Midway of his campaign after his nomination, Jimmy Carter made much of ordering the agents guarding him to dispense with the big black limousines that come naturally with and to Secret Service details. He had himself hauled around for a while in modest sedans. The suggestion was that he'd do away with much of the accustomed grandeur at the White House when he got there. Maybe he will. But a line of the November 22 schedule that his press staff handed out read "3:15 pm—enroute to White House (walking)." Walking, that is, the block down and across Pennsylvania Avenue from Blair House, the mansion where Presidents put up foreign and other honored guests. Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter arrived at the south portico of the White House in a tan Lincoln Continental limousine (District of Columbia license 344-900) that President Ford sometimes uses when he's away from Washington. A Secret Service agent drove the limousine, another agent sat beside the driver, and the customary station-wagon load of agents followed it, in addition to police cars fore and aft. Reporters who were allowed to observe the first minutes of the meeting in the Oval Office heard Carter ask whether a third conference of heads of the principal industrial nations might be a good idea and Ford answer that maybe a meeting first with the foreign ministers of the NATO alliance would be wise. Incredibly, the reporters also thought they heard Carter ask Ford, "Did you go to France?", referring to the economic summit conference at Rambouillet, near Paris, in October 1975.

Most of the little said about Carter's meetings with

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budget director James Lynn, Secretary Simon, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, HEW Secretary David Mathews and Federal Reserve Chairman Arthur Burns was routine banality. A few interesting details came out, however. Secretary Simon did practically all of the talking—about New York City's continuing financial crisis and the International Monetary Fund loan that Britain desperately needs to save it from disaster, among other things—while Carter listened and gave no hint whatever of what he'd do as President about these and other problems. James Lynn expected to meet Carter alone and was surprised to find Vice President-elect Mondale, transition director Jack Watson and Bowden Cutter, the Carter man assigned to the Office of Management and Budget for transition purposes, with the President-elect. Lynn authorized his press spokesman, Alan Wade, to say that Carter "asked all the right questions" and appeared to be impressively knowledgeable during their two-hour talk. It was evident that Carter understands that he can amend some of the big items in the fiscal 1978 budget that President Ford is required to submit before the January 20 inauguration but really cannot change it to the extent that his recent statements suggest. The chances also are that Carter understands in a way he didn't during his campaign that OMB already does for Presidents much of the staff work that he's spoken of having it do for him as if that were something new. It may be further assumed that Lynn didn't hide his view that Carter's cherished notion of "zero-base budgeting"—starting literally from scratch every year with every department's budget—is impractical nonsense in the form, probably over-simplified, that Carter usually describes it.

The guiding rule at the White House and, the senior assistants there hope, in the departments is to offer advice to the Carter transitionists only when and if they ask for it. An axiom of all transitions is that incomers suspect incumbents of trying to con them into doing things the incumbents' way. The incomers therefore tend to resist and discourage advice. Yet there is a body of useful knowledge that comes only with incumbency and probably cannot be effectively imparted to incomers. This is especially true, as successive Presidents and their assistants always have to learn for themselves, of the White House system. The very core of White House knowledge is that mistakes at the peak of federal power are terribly easy to make, that once made they are almost always irretrievable, and that—arguable judgment aside—they almost always result from bad information that has come to the White House from departments or agencies. The chief function of every White House staff, its highest and most necessary service to the President, is to distinguish sound from bad information and to extract sound information from the departments. That of course requires persons of quality in the principal staff positions, people who if they are new to government are willing to learn and able to learn very quickly from experienced people in or out of government. It doesn't necessarily require big staffs, it certainly doesn't require or justify huge staffs. But it requires substantial staffing, and the current total of 485 persons on the White House Office staff, roughly half "professional" and half secretarial, is really not the monstrous absurdity that it's often depicted to be. I'm inclined to agree with the Ford assistant who predicted the other day that Jimmy Carter probably will have realized before he takes office that the number is close to the necessary minimum and about right, however much in order some rearrangement and restructuring to suit the new President may be.

John Osborne

Following in FDR's Footsteps?

Carter on Trial

by Gerald W. Johnson

Even before it takes office the Carter administration has to its credit one accomplishment that is definitely worthwhile to the average American. It has given him a reason for wishing to live four years longer, for by so doing he may have a chance to see how it all comes out, or at least how it is beginning to come out. For what Carter seems to be undertaking cannot possibly be completed in four years. But if Carter means what he has been saying it is conceivable that he might be politically hanged, drawn and quartered in 1980, and

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yet have started something that will go thundering through American history long after James Earl Carter has vanished from the scene.

During the primaries Candidate Carter repeatedly made a statement to which not much significance was attached by the pundits who were analyzing events for the newspapers. The statement, variously phrased, was to the general effect of, "I am, perhaps, a populist," and it was largely ignored because most of the pundits had never heard of Thomas Edward Watson, and those who had knew him only as a wild incendiary who edited a magazine devoted largely to scurrilous attacks on Negroes, Catholics and Jews. But before that he had been a brilliant politician and to the end of his life he was a highly gifted writer. He served one term in Congress and got through the first bill establishing the rural free delivery of mail.

But he was an outsider when the Democratic party in Georgia was run by a coterie of old shellbacks whose sole political principle was "No change." So when this fellow at the head of a ragamuffin army of Crackers—the generic term for one-horse farmers and unorganized handicraftsmen—threatened the rule of the organization, they adjourned their own murderous clan warfare and banded together to smash the intruder, which they did with tremendous efficiency. But they made one costly mistake—they didn't murder him literally, so as leader of the Populist party he was a storm center of Georgia politics for 30 years.

This was long ago forgotten by Democrats north of the Mason-Dixon line and west of the Mississippi, but not in Georgia. There, Jimmy Carter, forced to abandon his naval career by a persistent seasickness for which the medical profession could do nothing, joined a brother in the highly profitable, but also highly tricky business of peanut farming near the village of Plains. He also practiced politics on the side and went steadily up until he reached the governorship where his administration was conspicuously harsh on political jobholders who could not do the work and as distinctly favorable to the poor, black as well as white.

Early in the campaign for the presidential nomination non-friends of Carter assiduously spread tales of his vindictive nature. Lacking the pleasure of personal acquaintance with the gentleman I could not judge the truth of those stories. But I can observe that, if they are true, then at the Democratic convention Carter did "feed fat the ancient grudge" he bore them and on November 2 the country redoubled the shattering effect of the impact, so the President-elect's thirst for vengeance must by now be completely assuaged.

In any event it is a perfectly safe bet that from now on he is going to have neither time nor energy for slapping at Georgia fleas. The opposition with which he must now deal is equipped with armament which, compared to that of the Georgia politicians, is as an anti-tank gun is to a schoolboy's slingshot.

If this is, as I believe it is, a fair estimate of President-elect Carter's situation pending his inauguration, where, then, is the justification for saying that it should inspire the typical American with a firmer resolve to live at least four years longer? The answer is that the statement should be qualified by restriction to that minority of Americans whose memory of politics reaches back 43 years, when we were watching another President-elect in a fairly similar situation. In us it produces a sensation comparable to what psychologists call the phenomenon of *déjà vu*, that is, a sensation of familiarity although we are certain that we have never seen the like before.

As the winter of 1932-33 was closing in, President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt was waiting for the coming of his first Inauguration Day, while a very large proportion, possibly a majority of his fellow-countrymen were convinced that the man, while endowed with a charming personality, simply didn't have the qualities it takes to handle the job successfully. To these mourners we, who were there that winter, can say as Sir Christopher Wren's epitaph says to seekers of his monument, *circumspice*, "look around you." Granted that the United States of America is not perfect, yet it is here, and everyone who reads history honestly is pretty sure that that would not have been the case had our leadership not been equal to the emergency, which was very great indeed.

This is not to assert, even by implication, that James Earl Carter is another Franklin D. Roosevelt. He isn't. But neither is the crisis that Carter faces a duplicate of the one Roosevelt faced, and the medication that Dr. Roosevelt applied with spectacular success might not—probably would not—work for Dr. Carter. What Roosevelt's patient, the American banking system, needed was a purge. It was loaded with intestinal parasites in the shape of very big banks with very high officers who knew no more about really large-scale banking than a hog knows about the binomial theorem.

What Carter must deal with is also, in part at least, the work of incompetent bankers, but it goes far beyond that. International diplomacy is made more difficult now not just by the complexity of the issues at stake, but also by the inexperience of many new leaders. We are without any precedent on which we can rely in dealing with them, as Henry Kissinger found to his confusion in Africa. The experience of Roosevelt is no guide because in FDR's day this problem was marginal and it has now become central. Justice Holmes' famous summation of Roosevelt as a second-class mind but a first-class temperament has often been regarded as disparagement. But the specimen under Holmes' scrutiny was a President, not of Harvard University, but of the United States. In Holmes' sardonic view, a first-class temperament has definitely more value in the White House than a first-class mind, as witness the records of the Adams pair, father and son, and Wilson, as contrasted with those of Jackson,

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Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt.

At any rate, Carter understood as well as Roosevelt a President's need for highly specialized information, especially about the structure of this government, in many ways unique. So at the very beginning of the primary campaigns he had a friend assemble a Brain Trust of his own consisting of a stable of young lawyers and law students. He set them to work making abstracts of every official document pertaining to the departments and non-departmental agencies, combining them into a single volume which was to be, and actually was, ready for him immediately after the election. You can estimate this as supreme confidence or colossal gall, but in either case it is very Rooseveltian. Carter's style on the hustings is quite different from that of Roosevelt, but the outcome leaves no doubt that it is almost, perhaps quite as effective. What remains for the future to disclose is whether he has enough, or, indeed any, of his predecessor's uncanny power to see in a particular man a special ability to deal with a particular crisis. In Harry Hopkins, for example, the incomparable transmitter who could deliver to anybody anywhere in the world Roosevelt's ideas and purposes undistorted, and bring back to the cripple in the White House exactly what the other man had said in reply, along with a shrewd guess at what he meant. Or in Frances Perkins the ability to discern what an inarticulate workman was actually thinking when he could not find words to express his hopes and fears. Or in many agents, but conspicuously in Harold Ickes and Hugh Johnson, hatchet-men who could operate with a flair, not leaving a bloody and repulsive mess behind them.

To the question, are such people available today, the answer may be a flat, unqualified, Yes. They are always present wherever there is a large assembly of human beings. What is doubtful is Carter's possession of Roosevelt's ability, or a sufficient part thereof, to pick them out and put them on the particular kind of job that they can handle. About that we shall not know until the experiment is made; and that applies to Carter as well as to you and me.

The fact is that the American people at this moment don't know enough about the causes of the crises that are obviously coming to a boil on every hand to know what qualities of mind and spirit President Carter will need to deal with them; therefore we don't know that he lacks them. There is very strong evidence that the main current of world history is now at the beginning of a great bend that will set it flowing in a new direction, but the soothsayers who pretend to know in what direction are frauds.

This is certainly no occasion for bedecking ourselves with garlands and dancing in the streets, but it is no occasion for dragging out the sackcloth and ashes, either, or weeping over the obvious fact that Carter isn't a Roosevelt. Roosevelt's work is done, and it was so well done that practically everything built during the Hundred Days still stands, stronger than ever after 43 years. Choosing a new man for a new kind of work is a reasonable procedure. We know that Carter is endowed with tremendous energy and a courage that would not blanch should Apollyon himself appear in the path, complete with horns, hooves and tail, to bar the way.

In the name of common sense, what more have we the nerve to ask? When I was a boy the scornful answer would have been, "Only the moon, with a white paling fence around it."

The City that Lost a Decade

San Francisco Blues

by T. D. Allman

San Francisco

There are still those mornings, filled with fog and sunshine, when the Golden Gate Bridge plays tag with reality—emerging then disappearing, like some vast and elegant theorem the mind grasps then loses. There are still those evenings when the sunset, caught on the Farallon Islands, seems to stay forever before it shakes itself loose and disappears into the Pacific Ocean. Sometimes, riding a cable car up Hyde Street, or strolling past one of the city's fine old, pre-earthquake buildings, one can see in San Francisco what many never doubted it was: the most beautiful and civilized,

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the most human city in America, perhaps the world.

But many are not so sure about that anymore, and the doubters include many San Franciscans. With the superb climate here, December can be a few degrees warmer than June, but this, nonetheless, is the winter of San Francisco's discontent.

A decade and less ago, this was an innovative and self-confident city. San Francisco was not only beautiful, she seemed to hold aloft a light in a time of fake moralism; North Beach let it all hang out. In an age of price tags, Haight-Ashbury did it for free. Across the Bay, Berkeley pioneered versions of free speech, and in Oakland the Black Panthers led the militant black revolution. Always liberal, and a strong union town, San Francisco during the Indochina war was a center of national protest.

Today the '60s are gone, and San Francisco seems less a beacon than a backwater, a city that has lost a decade and not yet found a role. Beneath the city's growing air of provincialism there also lie some sinister edges.

The violent crime rate here is far higher than in New York or Los Angeles. It was in San Francisco, not in the urban blight of the East Coast, that the bizarre "zebra killings" occurred. It was in San Francisco too, that in the final degeneracy of the protest movement, the Symbionese Liberation Army acted out its media saga of auto-destruction; here as well that Lynette Fromme, for the sake of Charles Manson and the redwood trees, tried to fire a bullet at point-blank range into President Ford's stomach. Labor relations here were soured, and the city was bitterly polarized this year by a long, self-defeating municipal strike and the successful impeachment of a pro-labor official. A decade after resisters filled the streets, San Francisco's gift to the US Senate is not Tom Hayden, not even John Tunney, but S. I. Hayakawa, the conservative educator who made his name in this town as the man who put the students down.

San Francisco pride lingers on, but chiefly in the form of that overweening narcissism that always had been the city's most unappealing characteristic. "Thank heavens I made the last shuttle back from LA," one San Franciscan recently remarked. "You can't even get unpasteurized beer down there."

San Franciscans are proud of the restoration of Ghirardelli Square and the Cannery from industrial ruins into entertainment complexes, and they treasure gathering places like Hoffman's, the Washington Square Grill, and the Rococo lobby of the Sheraton-Palace. But the décor is often too cute, and the patrons seem to select their politics—like their clothes and books and wine—for the proper effect. In the plastic shopping malls of Los Angeles, one often finds better merchandise, and more original minds.

Out-of-towners notice it after a few days. But a surprising number of San Franciscans admit what the visitor feels after eating Basque food and Chinese food and seafood, attending the opera and reinspecting Carol Doda's Annapurnas of silicone, after visiting the top of Coit Tower and the Top of the Mark and all those other traditional vantage points where San Franciscans go to admire their city and take satisfaction in themselves.

San Francisco these days, to put it bluntly, is boring—a city with the pretensions of a metropolis and the temperament of a provincial capital. The city not only lacks the stimulus of New York or Los Angeles. It cloys in a way other medium-sized American cities, also famous for their personality, like Boston and New Orleans, do not. At the opera, the crowds, even for a Sunday matinee, are overdressed, as self-conscious in their patronage of culture as one would expect in Dallas or Atlanta. And Sarah Caldwell is in Boston. The singles spots remain filled with examples of the alternate life style, but all the alternatives run to type. "Janis Joplin is dead," one local poet says. "Hell, Cass Elliot is dead. Sometimes," she concludes, "I suspect we all are."

"San Francisco is tyrannized by endless little customs," says Louis Lenzen, a corporate lawyer who commutes to the financial district by ferryboat across one of the most spectacular views in the world. "After the opera everyone goes to Trader Vic's. They never ask why they go to Trader Vic's—or to the opera for that matter." The San Francisco society columns still venerate intimate dinner parties given for European tourists with titles. Chinatown remains as exotic as a stage setting from Rogers and Hammerstein. But New York's Chinese community now is larger, and the Japanese investors prefer Los Angeles.

Herb Caen, veteran columnist of the *Chronicle*, has wondered aloud if San Francisco really is a city any more, not just a confederacy of living clichés. His fellow commentator, Charles McCabe, blames San Francisco's malaise on the tourist industry, and laments "the translation of San Francisco into the Manhattan of the West."

It is a characteristic San Francisco complaint, blaming outsiders for the city's problems, but it contains the kernel of an insight. Tourism has devoured Fisherman's Wharf, a lot of Chinatown and all of North Beach. But San Francisco's shimmering image has been most destructive not because of the visitors it lures, but for its effect on those who come to stay, and even on hometowners. "We don't have writers and artists and musicians in San Francisco any more," complains the Rev. Frank Evans, a pastor in the fashionably avant-garde Marin County suburb of Tiburan. "We have people who are attracted to the artistic life-style. No wonder this place is declining culturally. It draws the same kind of people an artists' colony does."

The negative effects of what might be called the San Francisco mystique are most conspicuous in the city's gay community. San Francisco's elegance and reputation for tolerance have made it the homosexual capital

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of America. But the gays have not really been integrated into the city. Instead—like the Chinese, the Filipinos, the blacks, and the hispanics—they have been ghettoized into a stereotype, turned into caricatures of themselves. They are tolerated, but only as another exotic, unassimilable ethnic group.

"This isn't a town where individualism counts for much," complains one married man, whose neighborhood has turned gay the way neighborhoods in other cities sometimes turn black. "If you don't fit the cliché, you find you really don't belong anywhere."

San Francisco's tendency to see itself as a static gallery of rigid stereotypes rather than as a cohesive community became the central issue during the recent elections. State issues, even the presidential race, were virtually forgotten as San Francisco debated Proposition I, which aimed at changing how the city's board of supervisors is elected. At issue was whether the officials would continue to represent the city as a whole or, alternatively, be elected on a local—which is to say ethnic—basis.

But Proposition I really was a referendum on whether San Francisco considered itself a city or a collection of competing life-styles; and in the ensuing debate, categories such as right and left, Democratic or Republican, became meaningless. Downtown financial interests and the labor unions, at each other's throats most of the year, both opposed Proposition I. But conservative hard-hats and radical blacks, Catholic ward leaders and militant gays all supported it.

In 1973, a similar proposal was defeated two-to-one. This time Proposition I was approved by a stunning majority, and even some of its supporters now fear its chief effect will not be to decentralize power, but to concentrate it in city hall. Whatever the long-term result, it now is clear that most San Franciscans no longer consider themselves citizens of a major metropolis. Instead their loyalties lie with small urban cantons.

"Everyone used to call San Francisco 'the city,' " remarks Franz Schurmann, a Berkeley Professor who commutes across the Bay to class by BART, San Francisco's multi-billion-dollar, chronically unreliable urban transport system. "Today," he adds gloomily, "no one calls it 'the city' any more, and maybe they're right. Maybe we've wound up like LA, just a collection of suburbs."

BART in itself is a microcosm of the San Francisco problem. No transit system in America is more attractive. But unlike the old, run-down lines in New York or Boston, it has failed to knit the Bay area into a cohesive whole. Other San Franciscans point out that the city's decline culturally is nothing new economically. The city has not enjoyed sustained demographic growth and economic self-renewal since the reconstruction following the 1906 earthquake. Since World War II, state growth has centered on Los Angeles, and the Bay area's growth has taken place outside the city limits.

In terms of popular culture, the San Francisco mystique also is becomming as much a matter of ancient history as the gold rush. It was seven years ago that a festival of love began at San Francisco's Altamont Raceway, and ended in a terror of random murder. It was even longer ago that Haight-Ashbury OD-ed on drug pushers and the Hell's Angels. Yet the decline continues, and even now San Francisco is passing over one more of its melancholy watersheds.

Rolling Stone, the rock-and-roll magazine that has been to a decade of San Francisco's tumult what the *Iliad* was to the Trojan wars, is packing its bag. The magazine's flamboyant editor, Jann Wenner, with a surfer's instinct for the newest wave, has decided to close down his San Francisco headquarters.

Soon *Rolling Stone*, and the entire pop ethos it embodies, will desert San Francisco forever—and relocate in New York of all places, that seedy, irrepressible Babylon that only a few months ago supposedly was being deserted in the stampede to the ascendant West.

For a generation now, San Francisco has fancied itself the Athens of the Sunbelt. Now Wenner and *Rolling Stone*, with their unfailing instinct for the cultural jugular, have delivered San Francisco the unkindest cut of all. "Without chic, radical or otherwise," laments one San Francisco publisher, "what is this city?" Wenner himself, who helped make the San Francisco mystique, provides the answer: "A dull provincial backwater." Today the city by the Bay writhes in the realization of its humiliation. Can it really be true that even Los Angeles has a better symphony, and a far better newspaper? Why do all those ships sail through the Golden Gate, pass San Francisco without saluting, and dock in Oakland instead? Have they no taste?

Sing on, Jeanette Macdonald. Play it again, Tony Bennett. Blare out, all you juke boxes, that refrain about flowers in their hair.

The truth is that the golden girl of the West has been left in the lurch, the victim yet again of that truism, trite but valid even here, that a pretty face is not enough.

COMING: Henry Fairlie on
John Toland,
Adolf Hitler and
Fraudulent history

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Spain's Democratic Monarchy

Forgetting Franco

by Tad Szulc

Madrid

In the midst of political chaos in southern Europe, Spain is emerging as the great democratic surprise of the late 1970s. A year after the death of Generalissimo Francisco Franco, the democratic process is being visibly reborn in this country where all forms of political life had been paralyzed for 36 years by the Francoist dictatorship, and before that, by the three-year trauma of a brutal civil war and the preceeding turmoil of the Republic.

Spain has not yet become a full-fledged, functioning European democracy, and many dangers still loom ahead. But the extraordinary fact about this first post-Franco year is that the government of King Juan Carlos I was able to dismantle most of the dictatorial structure of the *ancien régime*, restore many of the forgotten freedoms, and set Spain firmly on the road toward a democratic constitutional system. It is the first time in 45 years—since King Alfonso XIII was ousted in 1931—that the country is beginning to practice democracy in an orderly fashion.

Given the Spanish temperament and the national tradition of political violence, it is impressive that the young king and his advisers were able to accomplish the transition from dictatorship to today's incipient form of democracy while averting the bloodshed and confrontation that had been feared.

In the process, the new government succeeded in defusing the power of the Francoist extreme right wing apparatus—the so-called "bunker"—that, from the outset, was the principal barrier to democratic rule. During a recent visit to Madrid, just before the first anniversary of Franco's death, I was told on the highest authority that the "ultras" of the rightist movement, including some of Spain's most powerful bankers and businessmen, attempted to force a crash of the Madrid stock market in order to trigger economic panic to justify a military *coup d'état* that would have pushed the nation back into dictatorship, with or without the monarch. This move, which the government chose not to publicize, was quickly foiled, and ever since, the "ultras" have been fighting a series of losing rearguard battles.

At the other end of the political spectrum, the royal government was never seriously challenged by the leftist opposition that ranges from the Communists to left-of-center Christian Democrats. There were two reasons: in the first place, the leftist opposition in Spain is deeply divided, and in the second, the sophisticated Spanish Communist leadership (unlike the Portuguese Communists after the 1974 revolution) chose the strategy of non-confrontation and collaboration with democratic groups. Currently, the Communist party's main objective (and the Communist movement in Spain has its own internal divisions) is to gain legalization when all the political parties become lawful, before the next parliamentary elections in the spring. Spain was spared the leftist revolutionary upheavals that tore Portugal asunder.

In a curious way, Spain lives in a *de facto* democratic environment that has not yet been institutionalized. This is part of the evolutionary, or gradualist, policy that King Juan Carlos and his present prime minister, Adolfo Suárez, have developed to achieve formal democratization while avoiding an open conflict with the civilian and military rightist "ultras" and the survivors of the Franco "bunker." Francoism is being eroded, quite effectively, rather than destroyed by edict. It is a wise approach.

Thus, strictly speaking, political parties remain illegal in Spain except for Franco's moribund "National Movement" and what remains of the Falange. Nevertheless, political parties not only exist, but they operate loudly and lustily, multiplying like mushrooms after the rain. Party headquarters, whether they are Communist, Socialist or any other, function freely although, as a concession to residual Francoist legalisms, their buildings and offices are still unmarked. Every politician and journalist in Madrid has their addresses and telephone numbers, and the former secrecy has been entirely abandoned.

The government long ago gave up any effort to enforce the laws still on the books banning political parties (in fact, it never tried to enforce them) and forbidding unauthorized indoor gatherings by more than 21 persons. Until Franco died, policemen would often burst in to break up political meetings and arrest the participants. In recent years, however, such opposition activities were increasingly tolerated. The regime retains the right to issue or deny permits for large-scale political affairs, but applies it selectively.

Early in November, for example, the government refused to allow the Spanish Workers' Socialist Party (PSOE), the principal non-Communist leftist party, to hold its congress here. It may have been an excess of caution—the King and Suárez did not want to upset the whole political apple-cart prematurely—and the

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government was roundly criticized for its decision in the leftist and liberal press, something unthinkable a year ago. Last week, the rightists were permitted to hold a big rally to commemorate the anniversary of Franco's death, and they used the occasion to denounce the royal government for betraying the late generalissimo's memory and principles. The King and Suárez took the view that it was not worthwhile to ban what was essentially a futile political gesture (albeit tens of thousands attended the rally). They both were present at a solemn mass in Franco's memory. This, too, was really an empty gesture, but it fitted into the strategy of gradually defusing the rightist influence.

More to the point, the regime has abdicated its official control over the labor movement. Franco himself was losing control in recent years when clandestine but tolerated "Workers' Commissions" began to replace the official labor movement. In the last year, the official unions simply vanished. Now there are several labor federations linked to the emerging political parties (the Communists largely control the "Workers' Commissions"); they have no legal standing, but they act freely. Men like Suárez believe that the time has come for the government to get out of the business of trying to run labor unions and negotiate contracts between them and company management.

Strikes remain illegal mainly because this ban has not yet been struck from Spanish law. Nevertheless, there are strikes all the time, principally for economic reasons, and there is little the government can—or wants—to do about it. There have been some nasty clashes between the police and strikers, and occasional brief arrests. On November 12, Spain was paralyzed by a long-heralded 24-hour general strike, and the government just let it happen.

The Spanish press today is freer than at any time since 1936, when the civil war erupted, and there is no desire on the part of the government to apply existing laws allowing seizure of publications, censorship and the fining of offending editors. The government no longer applies the criteria of Franco's press law.

As a result, there has been an explosion of press freedom. No subject is taboo—not even harsh personal attacks on Franco and fascism, the latter now being a word commonly applied to the former system. After 40 years of imposed silence, the Spanish press has become a loud and powerful voice in Spanish politics, catering to an incredibly politicized society.

El País, the new morning newspaper in Madrid, has become an instant hit, and its circulation and political influence exceeds that of its three morning rivals combined, all of them identified with the passivity of the Franco days. The most widely read political weekly, *Cambio-16* (with a circulation that has soared to 500,000), has spawned an afternoon newspaper called *Diário Cambio*. (The word "cambio" in Spanish means "change," and the magazine was launched in 1971 by 16 far-sighted young journalists who had decided to test the Franco establishment.) Early in November, a Spanish court ordered the government to allow the reopening of the afternoon newspaper *Madrid*, closed by Franco seven years ago, and instruct it to pay millions of pesetas in damages to its owner, Rafael Calvo Serer, who returned from exile six months after Franco's death.

Basically the King and Suárez are the principal architects of the present democratizing process, and their policies have surprised most Spaniards. In fact, perhaps the most surprising of all has been the role of Juan Carlos, the 38-year-old king whom Franco named as his successor in 1969 after extracting from Juan Carlos a solemn pledge to the "principles" of the National Movement.

When Juan Carlos was sworn in following Franco's death, the general assumption was that he would try to keep together the Francoist edifice though liberalizing it to some degree. The impression was that the king was a weak figure, conditioned by the many years of Franco's tutelage to do little but to perpetuate the old system. And, indeed, much of this impression persisted during the first six months of the Juan Carlos regime. He kept in office Franco's prime minister, Carlos Arias Navarro, and the movement toward democracy was excruciatingly slow. The king tried to balance different political influences by naming José Maria Areilza (better known as the Count de Motrico), a liberal monarchist and former ambassador, as foreign minister, and Manuel Fraga Iribarne, an authoritarian intellectual who had been Franco's information minister, as deputy premier and minister of interior. This was a period characterized by frequent clashes between the police and demonstrators, frequent and capricious arrests, and little apparent attempt to change the old structure radically.

The change came last summer. Returning from a state visit to the United States, where he pledged himself in an address before the joint session of Congress to democratize Spain, Juan Carlos suddenly fired Arias and the whole cabinet (including Areilza and Fraga for good measure). The new prime minister was Suárez, at 44 the youngest man in Spanish history to hold this post, and his appointment had a shock effect on democrats in Spain.

Virtually unknown politically, Suárez had spent his youth in the Fascistic National Movement, had Falange links, and was said to be close to Opus Dei, the right-of-center lay Roman Catholic order that wielded vast economic and political power in Spain. Because he also was Juan Carlos' personal friend of many years, the first reaction was that the country was saddled with a playboy with a Fascist background.

But the surprise came quickly. Enjoying the king's full support, Suárez, a dynamic and no-nonsense politician, immediately served notice that the royal government proposed to move without delay to

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democratize Spain's institutions. He drafted legislation abolishing the *Cortes*, the largely appointive and docile Franco parliament, legalizing political parties, and proposing elections to a bicameral congress most of whose members would be chosen by universal suffrage.

The original amnesty proclaimed by Juan Carlos when he assumed the throne was broadened. Opposition leaders, including Communists, were released from prison. The press acquired almost total freedom. The pages of magazines and newspapers were filled with controversial articles and interviews, even with Communist leaders. They no longer feared being publicly identified by name. The rightwing "ultras" responded with dismay and fury. They threatened to mobilize all their resources to block the passage of the Suárez legislation in the *Cortes* where a two-thirds majority was required and most of the members were Franco followers. At the same time, the right launched its economic destabilization maneuvers.

Suárez's response was instant and tough. He realized he was asking the *Cortes* to commit suicide by voting itself out of existence, but he made it clear that, as he put it in a private conversation, he would tolerate no nonsense from either the right or the left. He sent word to the *Cortes* that the government was not prepared to accept any major amendments to his bill, and that it would fight the rightists to the bitter end.

In his and the king's opinion, Spain needed to transform itself into a democracy, and the time had come to stop calling things by other names: political parties, for example, should be called political parties and not "associations" of citizens as his predecessor had proposed. The freedom of the press had to be written into law and cease to be simply a matter of tolerance. Rightists, Suárez told his associates, had to learn to live in a new society. He also made no bones about his contempt for those who held power under Franco, whether as deputies or as opposition leaders. The former elites, Suárez felt, had no experience in politics, and politicians had no experience with power. In other words, Spanish politics had to be built up from the foundations.

The government's handling of the rightists and the *Cortes* was as ruthless as it was masterful. Determined to obtain the passage of his legislation, Suarez let out the word that if he fell short of the needed two-thirds majority, the king would use his constitutional prerogative to dissolve the *Cortes* and call elections for a constituent assembly. He also covered the military flank by naming Lt. Gen. Manuel Gutierrez Mellado as deputy prime minister in charge of defense, replacing a conservative general. Gutierrez Mellado, Spain's youngest lieutenant general, has a liberal reputation and a strong following among younger officers. Naming him to the number two spot in the government (clearly with the king's approval), Suárez also offered assurances to the military that the Communist party would not be legalized in the foreseeable future, although he would not rule out the possibility that it would be done later.

With this, the *Cortes* crumbled. On November 18, two days before the anniversary of Franco's death, the *Cortes* voted 425 to 59 to approve Suárez's legislation, thereby putting itself out of business. The majority vote in favor of dissolution was overwhelming because many conservative politicians with a following in the *Cortes*, notably former Deputy Prime Minister Fraga Iribarne, realized that political change was inevitable and that they might as well start planning for the future. Even before the vote, Fraga, one of Spain's most ambitious men, formed a right-of-center political party, the Popular Alliance (sarcastically called the "Holy Alliance" by his many detractors), in preparation for free elections that already seemed inevitable. What the king and Suárez had accomplished, then, was a constitutional *coup d'état* designed to set democracy in motion.

As approved by the now extinct *Cortes*, the new law calls for an elected Chamber of Deputies and a Senate in which 200 members (four from each province of Spain) would be chosen through universal suffrage and 75 named by the king. The latter provision was the only concession to tradition.

The next step is a national referendum in December to approve the political reform package, including an electoral law that the government is currently drafting. The only major unresolved point is whether deputies will be chosen by direct vote or through proportional representation of political parties. The government is certain to win the referendum, and Suárez plans to hold elections early next spring.

Ironically, it is the left and the liberals who now think that the government is moving too fast toward democratization, a view stemming from the belated realization that the King and Suárez have pre-empted the democratic opposition by pushing through the political reforms. This, in effect, leaves these groups with no initiatives of their own, except to argue for a rapid legalization of the Communist party.

The political reality here is that the king and his prime minister represent the center or the center-right, and that their ultimate objective is to put in power a democratically elected government of this persuasion. Given the wholly disorganized condition of the liberal and leftist groups and what appears to be conservative (but not right wing) sentiment in much of the population, the Suárez calculation may be correct. This is why politicians like Fraga Iribarne now favor early elections and the direct suffrage system, while the left and the liberals prefer to wait longer, presumably to organize themselves better, and urge proportional representation that is more helpful to the existence of a multiplicity of parties.

Such is the disarray among leftists and liberals that

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Cambio-16 felt compelled to warn in a recent editorial that "the opposition is so weak that it's frightening, and freedom here can be erased with the stroke of a pen." The magazine also noted, I think accurately, that the opposition parties "remain dominated by the strict and unreal mentality of clandestine militants." The problem, of course, is that after 40 years of dictatorship, democrats find it hard to function cohesively, particularly when the regime has stolen their democratic thunder.

Guadiana, suspecting the worst, has been campaigning against Fraga Iribarne, calling him a Fascist. A leading liberal monarchist told me, stunningly, that the king "is doing too much governing." A Socialist leader (actually there are *two* main Socialist parties here) complained that the government is not consulting adequately with the left.

These arguments naturally relate to the kind of political leadership Spain will have next year. There is no dispute over the basic fact that the country is now moving toward European democracy. But both those in government and others agree that Spain still faces plenty of problems.

Politically, the rightists still hold power, exercising considerable influence with police organizations: the gendarmerie-like Civil Guard, the Armed Police (which is the riot police in the cities), and the political units of the General Directorate of Security (DGS). While the armed forces appear to be totally loyal to the king and his government, there is some doubt whether the police forces are under as much control. There are suspicions, for example, that the police tends to cooperate with such "ultra" rightist terrorist groups as the "Guerillas of Christ-the-King."

Then there is the problem of Basque terrorism conducted by the ETA, the guerrilla arm of Basque nationalists. This terror has led to rightist reprisals, and there are reasons to suspect that the Civil Guard may be involved in them. The Civil Guard has never been kind to the Basques, and some political leaders here think the government would be well advised to remove the Guard units from the three Basque provinces and replace them with a territorial guard.

Finally, the Spanish economy is not doing well. There has been a large outflow of capital—even a flight of cash in the form of peseta bills—and Spain's balance of payments is deteriorating rapidly. Socialists and liberals are urging a government policy of austerity, but the rulers here are not ready for unpopular steps. But in the end the sense of optimism dominates. The most important fact is that Spain is entering Europe's democratic orbit after a 40-year absence.

Rubbing Out Red Lines

People's Banks

by Roger Neville Williams

Veteran radicals gathered in October at the Estes Park YMCA Camp in the Rockies to talk, among other things, about setting up banks for people.

The Estes Park Conference on the Public Use of Capital, as it was called, was hosted by Colorado's "public interest treasurer," Sam Brown. It was an outgrowth of discussions at the Annual Conference on Alternative State and Local Public Policies, the most recent held last June in Austin, Texas. "At Austin we were frustrated because we wanted to get in deeper on specific questions, to talk in more detail," Brown said. A former antiwar leader and McCarthy youth organizer, Brown called together 50 people from across the country, who like him, now find themselves inside the system and in a position to influence existing financial institutions and create alternative ones. (Brown was accused by the Colorado Banker's Association of going up into the mountains to secretly plan a state bank. He didn't.)

"Public control over capital is what we're talking about," said the co-director of this project, Jeff Faux; he sounded the only truly radical note when he outlined an alternative to the prevailing view of impending economic crisis. (In the conventional scenario, organized interest groups will compete with one another for

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the country's diminishing capital wealth. Builders of B-1 bombers, for example, would fight it out with residents of decayed inner-city neighborhoods for federal loans.) Faux urges, instead, that the government create a system of development banks to provide immediate investment capital in starved areas of the economy and begin the process of building local, community-controlled financial institutions. He also stressed a need for new policies that extend public control to the private banking system: "The power of the private banking system is currently beyond government in the United States. We have the policy tools to increase the incomes of the wealthy, but not to make them invest where we want them to." Faux feels that only a banking industry serving the people can bring us to a decentralized, more humane and environmentally sane society. He broached the subject of public allocation of private capital, which at a second look is not as radical an idea as income allocation—such as McGovern's guaranteed annual minimum income.

Although *Barron's* hinted that some of the people at this conference were Communists, they seemed far more concerned with saving capitalism than undermining it. Rhetoric was noticeably absent, and the ghosts of Che Guevara and Karl Marx were replaced by those of Chicago organizer Saul Alinsky and Justice Louis Brandeis, author of the classic on this subject: *Other People's Money*. Derek Shearer of the California Public Policy Center, author of "Public Control of Public Money," pointed out: "A lot of things done in the banking world in Canada and Western Europe would be considered revolutionary in this country. We're behind the rest of the free world in terms of banking policy." Banking is clearly too important to be left to the bankers.

Sam Brown said that in his office in the State Capitol he once got out a map of Denver and a compass; he circumscribed a line with a mile radius around Cherry Hills Country Club, and sure enough, over 80 percent of the managers and board members of Colorado's big five banks—where most of the state's public deposits rested until Brown came to office—lived within the circle. All but two were white males over 50; the exceptions were women, two wives of bank owners. Brown believes board members and managers should live in the area they serve. The "elite" that runs the banking system at nearly all levels in the United States is hopelessly out of touch with the dimensions of the social problems in the country, Brown believes, because it never encounters them at home or at work. He wonders why public accountability of publicly chartered banks is considered a radical concept.

Last year Congress passed the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act of 1975, which seeks to cut back the practice of "redlining," or refusing to make loans in specific geographic areas. The act went into effect last June, and immediately a number of big lenders asked the Federal Reserve not to compel them to disclose mortgage information. They lost, and must now make the information avaliable. But the federal government will not collect or collate it, and so it remains in the offices of 8500 mortgage lenders around the country. New York State, however, is putting some teeth into the bill.

William Woodward, Deputy State Banking Commissioner of New York and former publisher of [*More*], the journalism review, told the gathering he is part of a new generation of bank regulators. Looking tweedy and conservative, he said "We're in the business of mortgage disclosure." He is spending $150,000 to have computers analyze the mortgage data sent to him by New York banks. Bank reports must give the ethnic origin of loan applicants and their place of residence. Next year Woodward's office will issue a study of mortgage flow patterns for the state. The final report will affect how the regulatory agency looks on requests to open branch offices. "The criteria for a branch bank now is not how many loans you make in the community," he says. He believes it should be. Woodward is also trying to end the practice of interlocking directorates, and he requires that all "insider loans" be reported to the banking authority.

"What Woodward is doing is a pretty daring thing, to find out where the money is going," Derek Shearer explained. "Bankers say you're just a step away from credit allocation, and then socialism." A Chicago community organizing group (National People's Action) represented at Estes Park by Shel Trapp, was one of the original supporters of the Home Mortgage Disclosure Act. Senator William Proxmire (D, Wis.) conceded that the bill "would never have become law but for the research and local organizing activity undertaken by NPA." Proxmire, the bill's sponsor, sent his aide, Bob Kuttner, to the conference with instructions to come back to Washington with some good draft legislation. Kuttner, a staff aide on the Senate Banking Committee, calls Proxmire "A radical free-enterpriser in the Nader model—he hoists the free-enterprisers on their own rhetoric."

"Bank legislation finally has a public interest lobby," Kuttner said, noting that the anti-redlining campaign laid the intellectual groundwork for public banking policy. Kuttner: "There is strong sentiment in the banking committee for community-service review at the time a bank opens a branch. Right now a bank doesn't have to tell anyone what they're going to do for the neighborhood—that's crazy." Darel Grothaus of the Mayor of Seattle's Reinvestment Task Force described the bitter opposition the city faced in trying to force capital into redlined areas. Jim Lowery of California's Center for New Corporate Priorities told the group that in Los Angeles, "One seventh of the population lives in redlined areas that receive less than one percent of the single family mortgage loans. Right now it is impossible to tell where a bank's deposits come

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from and where its loans go." Lowery and his associates persuaded the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors to adopt a unanimous motion to remove all county monies from any institutions found to be practicing redlining. And last April, California Governor Edmund Brown, Jr. signed into law the nation's toughest and most stringent set of anti-redlining regulations, which require the state-chartered savings and loan associations to make extensive geographic loan disclosures, adopt affirmative action mortgage programs for minorities, and be answerable to boards of inquiry when they reject loan applications. The state S&L commissioner can deny mergers or branch expansion to banks that don't comply.

These are some of the many ways that state officials can offer incentives to commerical banks to improve their lending habits. Sam Brown's strategy, for example, is to use $125 million in state funds as leverage to get banks to make socially desirable loans. This follows the policy of Adlai Stevenson, III who, as Illinois State Treasurer in the mid-'60s, instituted a program of "linked deposits" under which state funds were allocated to banks according to the record of the banks in making "social investments," such as in housing rehabilitation, minority businesses, and businesses in high unemployment areas. In Colorado, Brown has taken this a step further by proposing to accept lower interest rates for state funds from banks that better serve minorities, small businesses, women and rural residents. To make up the loss, he has opened up the state's checking account for bids in order to find a higher interest rate.

Other experiments are being tried. State banks appear to be an idea whose time has returned. Most countries have them, the US used to have them, and one state—North Dakota—still has one. The Bank of North Dakota was formed in 1919 and now has assets of $440 million, making it the largest commerical bank in the state. Last year its profits were $9 million. Its president, Herb Thorndal, told the conference that the BND made the first student loan in the US, carries $62 million in participation loans with other banks, and has recently financed a potato growers cooperative, two sugar beet refineries, a hydraulic salt mine, a down jacket company and North Dakota's Steiger Tractor Company. He wants to incorporate a state housing authority into the bank's regular operation. Legislators in California, New York, Washington, Oregon, Vermont, and even the city of Berkeley, are pushing for state and city owned banks modeled on the Bank of North Dakota.

Belden Daniels, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Govenor's Task Force on Capital Formation for Economic Development, told the gathering he is pushing for a Central Development Bank in Massachusetts. He explained that it would redirect $25 billion in capital flow in the state and discourage the export of capital; for example, Massachusetts' capital would not be used to build condominiums in Miami. Daniels' answer to charges that he stands for credit allocation is: "We already have a credit allocation program in this country—it allocates credit to the *Fortune* 500."

Roy Gryzwinski, Chairman of Chicago's South Shore National Bank, demonstrated to a surprised audience that "neighborhood development is competitive with commercial outside investment earnings." A bank holding company with private and church foundation backing bought South Shore when it went out of business three years ago and redirected its policies toward neighborhood preservation. The company has operated the bank "as an innovative development institution that continuously infuses capital, long-term credit, and technical assistance into social economic improvement projects." Daniels and Gryzwinski agreed that the biggest problem in this kind of banking is technical competence in assessing risk. Commercial banks, offering higher salaries, get the best available talent.

Another source of "risk" capital is the group of 27 Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS), a national association run by the Urban Reinvestment Task Force, a partnership of HUD and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board. Task Force Director William Whiteside told the conference, "You don't undo the damage of redlining by erasing red lines. Cities have dis-invested in the inner-city, and NHS is a model program, a living laboratory of how to re-invest in neighborhoods—how to underwrite an older neighborhood and make loans on 50-year-old houses, but avoid foreclosures."

On the last morning of three days of intense information-swapping, talk turned to Jimmy Carter. Laurence Rosser of Illinois' Woodstock Project said, "Under Carter there's a shot at getting sympathetic regulatory leadership"; it was generally agreed that there were certain "targets of opportunity" in the Carter administration, such as HUD appointments and the Comptroller of the Currency. But the mood of this group was expressed by Fred Branfman, former director of the Air War Project in Washington, DC. He said, "We're part of an infrastructure in this country that is moving toward a new agenda. Carter's programs will probably fail also, leaving us as the providers of an alternative."

Sam Brown agreed, and said: "We must build a constituency, deal with community resources, construct a network of information, and continue to focus on state and local finance institutions." Brown, along with Tom Hayden, Madison's Mayor Paul Soglin, Austin's Mayor Jeff Friedman, and Lee Webb, National Director of the Conference on Alternative State and Local Public Policies, are already planning the next full conference, to be held in Colorado in June. Upwards of 700 state and local public officials and community organizers are expected to attend.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on films

The Last Tycoon

(Paramount)

A few years ago I had the chance to read Harold Pinter's screenplay of Proust. It's easily the best film adaptation of a major literary work that I know—and it's still unproduced. Pinter has since written a much lesser adaptation of a much lesser work, and it has been produced. Much of the reason for the inferior job in the second case is that *The Last Tycoon* is not, as it's often called, an uncompleted novel: it's only a substantial fragment, which Edmund Wilson's notes make plain. And that fragment, though astonishingly complex, is not even in final form. Pinter could, to an unforeseeable degree, transform Proust cinematically because he had a finished masterpiece in hand: he had to condense as well as reimagine, but he had some fulfilled designs with which to work. Not so with Fitzgerald. Pinter had to worry about matters that the author had left unfinished.

Take the opening. In the first chapter of the novel, a plane carrying film people back to Hollywood has to stop over in Nashville because of bad weather, and three of those people drive out to the Hermitage, the home of Andrew Jackson. Themes of film-world power and cruelty are introduced against this background. Fitzgerald's intent was to touch some large continental-historical surges beneath the maneuvers of the moment, and his notes show that he meant to complete the frame later by returning to social-political matters. But death intervened. Pinter, quite understandably, didn't want to take on the job. So he simply omitted the first part of the frame, and began his film in Hollywood. The result, however, is banal, without any of Fitzgerald's resonance. The picture opens flatly, with the boy-wonder Monroe Stahr viewing film rushes. (Rushes are in black-and-white, "our" film is in color.) It starts like just one more Hollywood story.

The end of the film is even worse, for the same basic reason. Fitzgerald planned a deadly struggle between Stahr and his fellow-executive Frank Brady, with political overtones: complicated by the affection of Brady's daughter for Stahr, and Stahr's affair with Kathleen Moore as a major element in a larger struggle. All we get from the film is a counterpoint of romances: the romance of filmmaking and the romance in the filmmaker's life. At best we can see that his faculty for the latter empowers his faculty for the former.

It's a weak argument, I think, that the script is (relatively) true to what Fitzgerald did, rather than what he would have done. *The Last Tycoon* is published as a fragment; but the film is put forth as a whole. It isn't, and Pinter aggravates matters. He implies at the end that Stahr is hitting the skids because of his disappointment about Kathleen and his consequent futile fight with Brimmer, the Communist union organizer. The quick skid isn't credible. And Pinter inserts some poor elements: the sudden death of a film-editor in a projection room, which adds nothing; a drunken rebellion scene for Boxley, the English writer, which contradicts a scene that Fitzgerald wrote (omitted here) to show the educative effect of Stahr on Boxley. And Pinter synopsizes the character of Edna, Kathleen's friend, by establishing in her first scene that Edna is a whore. Fitzgerald had Kathleen find this out later and tell Stahr. To let Stahr know it before he even meets Kathleen is to put Kathleen in an odd light.

The flaws in this film are by no means confined to the script. Only occasionally did I get from the screen any Fitzgerald feeling—which I can define only as feelings cognate to those that *The Last Tycoon* generates in me. Partly this is because of the editing by Richard Marks. Even in Fitzgerald's unfinished fragment, there is wonderful control of tempo and rhythm, but this picture seems to jostle along in chunks that elbow one another out of the way. As for the direction, well, if I had to choose the celebrated director least suited to both Fitzgerald and Pinter, I might well pick Elia Kazan. The producer Sam Spiegel has said he has always wanted to work with Kazan again, but their early collaboration was *On the Waterfront*—just a bit different in tonalities.

I can't even say that Kazan has been more successful here with the studio power-plays than with the romantic element. In the scene where Stahr fires the director Red Ridingwood, a neat set-piece as Fitzgerald wrote it, Kazan lames the action by taking it out of Stahr's limousine and making a clumsy wait necessary before the payoff line at the end about the jacket. In the scene where Stahr improvises a story for Boxley to demonstrate film storytelling, Fitzgerald asks for three movements in the scene: Stahr gets up behind his desk, and takes out his key-ring before he tells the story, then picks up his key-ring after it, that's all. Kazan utterly dissipates the cool control of the scene by having Stahr "act out" the story all over the room.

For Kazan's discomfort with the romance, take just one example—the scene where Kathleen and Stahr make love on the floor of his unfinished beach house. Fitzgerald finishes the scene by having them slip to the floor, and we almost get the feeling that the sea, just down the beach, has swelled to hide them from sight. Not with Kazan. (I assume this wasn't Pinter's idea.) He has to let us see Kathleen undress, with one good ass shot as in James Bond flicks, then has to have the naked Kathleen walk over to Stahr and tear off his clothes. So much for Fitzgeraldian mystique.

Kathleen is played by a newcomer, Ingrid Boulting, who has a certain amount of irreducible British charm. (And her round-cheeked face has some resemblance to early photographs of

Films Worth Seeing

The Marquise of O . . . Eric Rohmer's exquisite film "placement" of Kleist's novella, in Kleist's language. A gem.

The Memory of Justice. Marcel Ophuls' huge, hugely intelligent essay on justice, beginning with Nuremberg and moving outward. Most of it beautifully made, all of it most welcome.

Network. TV power plays. Paddy Chayefsky's script is basically phony, but it crackles along. Cast and direction are slick.

The Seven-per-cent Solution. Sherlock Holmes meets Sigmund Freud—and high time, too, for both of them. A wonderfully acted romp.

SK

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Sheilah Graham who maintains, very credibly, that Kathleen was modeled on herself.) Boulting seems a bit too young for the experience she says she has had, but she's touching. Even more touching is another newcomer, Theresa Russell, in the easier role of Cecelia Brady. (The script doesn't make her the narrator as Fitzgerald did, but then he hadn't solved that problem technically.) Tony Curtis is good, and was certainly helped by Kazan, as a great screen lover who is worried by off-screen impotence. Robert Mitchum beefs along in the nebulous role of Brady, which is equally nebulous in the book and Jack Nicholson tries to juice up the thin role of the Communist, in an episode that is even thinner than the same episode in the novel. Calendar note: Morgan Farley, a handsome young Broadway actor of the 1920s, is carried in and out by a male nurse as an antique studio executive.

Some of the casting is poor. Ray Milland is not an impressive actor at best, and he's utterly wrong for the New York lawyer Fleishacker. Donald Pleasence is too lower-class for the snooty Englishman Boxley. And Jeanne Moreau, as a temperamental star, looks so ravaged in the rushes as well as in "our" camera that it's hard to believe that Stahr thinks she looks beautiful up there.

The center of course is Stahr, the character based on Irving Thalberg. (Thalberg was also at least partly the basis of Miles Calman in "Crazy Sunday.") It's an interesting irony that when Fitzgerald was writing about the boy wonder mourning the dead star he had been married to, it was in fact the boy wonder who had died and the star, Norma Shearer, who had survived. Another interesting irony: Sheilah Graham writes, "After Norma Shearer read *The Last Tycoon* she said to me, 'But it's not a bit like Irving.'" All one can say—possibly brutally—is that Fitzgerald's Irving will outlast Shearer's.

Robert De Niro does excellently as Stahr but cannot give a really excellent performance. This pat contradiction simply means that, as the part is written, De Niro cannot realize it either vertically or horizontally, either as a character in depth or as a dynamic in a web of actions. But he accomplishes two things beautifully. He is completely convincing in his enchantment by Kathleen: he almost seems to have moved into a fine mist. And if you remember him in *Mean Streets* and *Godfather II*, you will see how he has altered the use of his body. In those pictures his body was the source of everything: his physicality was his power. Here his body is merely some necessary equipment for a man whose mind and concerns are elsewhere. De Niro's performance is the chief reason for seeing this film.

One Man's Meat

Frederick Wiseman's New Film

Frederick Wiseman's extraordinary new film *Meat* is and is not about slaughterhouses. From the first shots of cows on an open range there is no doubt blood will flow, yet by the time the actual slaughtering arrives, it has already taken its place within a more involved process. Well before the killing starts, the product is desensitized, both trivialized by language and overwhelmed by technology. In a frenzied montage, salesmen make deals in their own peculiar jargon—"light heiferettes" and "ungraded goosenecks in combos." This isn't just meat, it's the meat industry—mechanized, scientific, diversified.

The connection between the packing house workers and the animals they're doing in is not pressed too hard, but the similarities of their plight is interesting. The cows at their troughs have the same vacant stares as the workers at lunch. The long lines of animals being neatly sliced into component parts is parallel to the compartmentalized lines of workers performing the dismembering. When the cows are too slow walking either to their corrals or to their death, electric prods help out. In an extended episode about a management-union negotiation over a job reclassification, management is as insistent on its power as are the prod-wielders. At all stages and with all animals, getting out of line evokes a quick direct response.

A nightmare vision, *Meat* is one of Wiseman's studies (like *High School* and *Basic Training*) of things going far too well. Scant pretense remains of even the slightest variation from absolute in-

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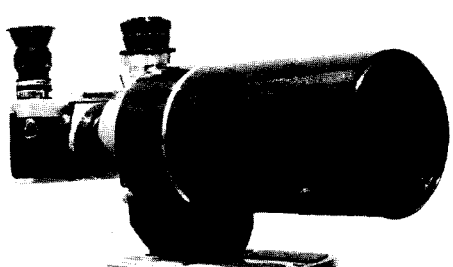

stitutional control. Life and death, food and work, are governed according to projected weekly kill figures. Labor reorganizations seek maximum efficiency. We feel ourselves grasping for trivial indications of humanity. A worker glancing hesitantly over his shoulder at a televised football game while he separates internal organs practically becomes a rebel against the system. We root for a temporarily errant sheep. Such moments are rare.

Inevitably, given Wiseman's predilection for images of captivity, the specter of concentration camps hangs heavy over *Meat*. In an eerie recapitulation following the first extended butchering sequence, Wiseman shows us again the paraphernalia employed, now neatly stored for use the next day—vice-like pincers that hack through bone, chains, hooks, pulleys, varieties of saws. If *Primate* was an image of misdirected science in the name of unspecified progress, then *Meat* advances imaginatively Arendtian possibilities. There's nothing necessarily evil about the present activities of this institution; the evil lies in potential. One feels that workers could come to their positions some morning and find the company had expanded into new territory.

Wiseman's films used to have plenty of scenes clearly establishing institutional similarities, but of late the sense of connection has become more abstract, more pure. In an early film such as *High School*, the continual thread of military analogies was explicit. *Titicut Follies* was filmed in a place that was both hospital and jail. Wiseman in these first films seemed fascinated by the possibilities that institutions dealing with varied social concerns could come out looking quite like each other. His generally mosaic structure was a form that could easily allow for cross-connections.

In *Essene*, *Primate*, *Welfare* and especially in *Meat*, the level of argument shifts. In the monastic retreat of *Essene*, basic issues of social order are met head on. Questions of establishing organizational hierarchies, handling uncooperative community members, and espousing institutional principles are confronted on a more rarified level. In these later films, Wiseman does not appear so much to hold up the institutional mirror in order to reflect specific social problems, as to seek out institutional situations which are themselves representations of broader levels of ideas within American culture. Consequently, the episodes in the films are much longer and self-revelatory, not just pieces in larger puzzles.

Welfare gives one a strong feel for near-total bureaucratic chaos and urban breakdown, without being expressly "about" these issues. *Primate* is a metaphor for science run rampant, and an investigation of the American preoccupations with sex and technology. Both films functioned in a poetic dimension unusual (but by no means unprecedented) in documentary films. These are, after all, pretty straightforward journalistic studies as well as theses. Wiseman's response to direct experience is to seek to record it in instances of deepest ambiguity and with the greatest range of possibilities.

In *Meat*, we could get by simply attending to the intricacies of the meat packing process (itself something of a euphemism—there's more here than packing). We could move up the scale by wondering what watching that process does to us, especially watching it twice in the same film. We could go next to the non-slaughtering scenes and think about why they might be included, see the structural connections and the visual similarities. But more interesting, because we find them in such an unexpected location, are Wiseman's dramatic aspirations, the comedy and the out-of-kilter imagery.

Meat, believe it or not, is a hysterically funny film, rivalled perhaps only by *High School* and *Primate* in its black comedy. The slaughtering process can be seen as a choreographed production, oddly hypnotic through long stretches of wordless noise. The best cameo role is played by a Judas Goat, delivering a portrait of animal treachery in action more fiendishly subtle than Olivier in *Marathon Man*. The customary talkiness of Wiseman films is often supplanted by a greater faith in the power of action and images to speak for themselves. Grand Guignol seeps in around the edges.

Because there is no narration in *Meat* and scarcely a story, except for following the slaughtering process, some may feel deceived by Wiseman's avoidance of a clearly stated social problem. Yet the surface simplicity of *Meat* should be taken as a challenge. We must see these events through fresh eyes, as if one really had a chance to improve them.

Stephen Mamber

Stephen Mamber is author of *Cinéma Vérité in America* (MIT Press).

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Books Considered

Roots
by Alex Haley
(Doubleday; $12.50)

Several years ago, wandering through the British Museum, Alex Haley came across the Rosetta Stone, with its parallel inscriptions of Egyptian demotic, heiroglyphic, and Greek letters, from which the French scholar Champollion brilliantly deduced their common meaning and made available a wealth of heiroglyphic texts to modern civilization. Haley was moved to impose on himself a challenge he considered in some respects similar: he decided to test the heiroglyphics of his family's 200-year oral history, notably some strange, allegedly African words passed down from an ancestor, against the facts that intense research might yield. His relentless search led him eventually to the village from which had come Kunta Kinte, the slave who founded the family in America with his marriage to his master's cook. Haley was also able to stand on a dock in Annapolis, Maryland, exactly 200 years to the day after Kinte arrived in America from The Gambia in the hold of a slave ship.

A narrative history of the family from the birth of Kunta Kinte to the maturity of Haley himself, *Roots* is a hybrid work. It links the detective skills of a superior investigative reporter to the powers of a would-be fiction writer, and the product is a work of extremely uneven texture but unquestionable final success. All Haley's burrowing necessarily could not unearth more than the bones of his family's history, which is, nevertheless, considerably more than most black Americans are able to recover of their past. Haley has tried to arrange these bones through the power of his imagination. The Mandingo *griot* or oral historian who corroborated the Haley family legend had a purer sense of the truth; "his body rigid, his neck cord standing out, his words seeming almost physical objects," the *griot* stuck tenaciously to the facts. The author of *Roots* goes instead for broke, casting into third-person narrative form the largely invented story developed from his dig into the past. One might take this difference between the two men as a

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further piece of evidence of the decline of Africa in America, an idea to which Haley is sensitive. The *griot*'s ambition is to preserve the past; Haley's desire is to uncover, then popularize it.

The near-religious significance of many black American's confrontation of the past is clear. Until very recently, his sense of cultural time was dominated by a distrust, even a horror of looking back into slavery, much less Africa. Harry Belafonte used to sing in the '50s about his island in the (Caribbean) sun, where his people had toiled "since time begun!" But reaction to this sense of shame has led to the discovery of almost as many heroic slave rebellions as there were white patricians on the *Mayflower* or, in another time, pieces of wood from the Holy Cross. Haley's search for his ancestors is not conducted to discover unvarnished truth but rather, from one perspective, to justify the history of blacks in America—as if that history needed justification. There is a dominant angle of vision in *Roots*; almost the entire story is seen from the vantage point of a belief in the necessity of social and political justice, which is the principal romantic illusion to inform the text. From an artistic and intellectual point of view there is what may be for some readers a fateful shift of emphasis from the pathos and ingenuity of the author's search for his family toward the elevation of its members to mythical level as accurate representatives of the black race in America, with Kunta Kinte as the archetypal African warrior prince. Side by side in the book, then, exist these twin desires for the illumination of truth and the cultural propaganda. What furthur complicates this odd combination is the absence of radical political belief on the author's part; Haley's values, except concerning the worth of black people, are those of the masses of Americans, to whom the book is in fact dedicated.

In one sense Haley's ancestral family bears its mythic burden well; with the exception of Kunta Kinte, after all, the members are really ordinary. But it is on Kinte that the book is based. Though Haley's account of his hero's African childhood sometimes reads like a dramatization of a master's thesis on childhood and youth among the Mandingo people in the mid-18th century, more often it is suffused in the light of Haley's reverence for the Africa of his ancestors and his loving account of their society. His re-creation of Kinte's middle-passage journey in the hold of a slave ship is harrowing, the major place in the book where facts are incontrovertibly alchemized into vivid narrative; and his presentation of Kinte's unfolding consciousness of the strange new white world of America is brilliant, yielding startling insights into the psychological process of American slavery, and into aspects of American culture then and now. Kunte Kinte's rage for freedom—one foot is cut off after his fourth attempt to escape—impressed on succeeding generations a respect, however muted, for the integrity of their origins and their dignity as well.

On the other hand, the middle of the book is dominated by the flamboyant figure of Kinte's grandson, Chicken George, reared by his white father—and owner—to be an expert trainer of gamecocks. Haley's accounts of cockfighting in the South in the 19th century are lively (though there are too many of them), but Chicken George himself is about as interesting as a plucked bird. Survival and endurance replace defiance as the central concern of Kunta Kinte's clan, and it is at this point that its members become History. Haley's integration of personages and events from the American past into his narrative is the stuff of pageants or some other moribund medium, such as television, and fails to conceal the fact that uncovering the truth about the past does not necessarily make it interesting.

The solemnity of the basic theme of *Roots* also cannot obscure the fact that the Afro-American novel is too accomplished in its basic skills for *Roots* to pass as a well wrought novel or romance. Technically, the work is so innocent of fictive ingenuity that it seldom surpasses the standards of the most popular of historical romances. Haley's ability to write dialogue and dialect is competent at best, and stilted and artificial far too often. Nor is the work helped much by the strange and fitful dramatic strokes its author casts into the void (Kinte, for example, does not sleep with a woman until he marries at the age of 39, which, as Hawthorne used to write in his journal about odd events, must be symbolic of something). Similarly, sociological and historical scholarhsip on both West Africa and the American slave centuries is too developed for Haley's uncoverings to be met as revelations. Undoubtedly the book will make history and sociology more familiar to its readers, but that role in itself can hardly be the reason for the possibly long-lasting consequence of this narrative.

One pushes through *Roots*, sometimes swiftly, sometimes laboriously, as often captivated as irritated by the limitations of its concern with form. But there is no denying the extraordinary force of individual passages and episodes or—more importantly—the exhilaration with which one bursts forth, as from the underbrush of dried fact and tangled genealogical vines, into the present time and the living presence of the author. For one dazzling moment, from which it seems impossible to recover, the past becomes the present, and the present becomes the past, and there is a sense of circularity, of completeness, of integration of sensibility within the black American experience that is unparalleled, to my knowledge, in either fiction or scholarship concerning Afro-America.

The primary effect of *Roots* is not, however, partisan, if only because the implied relationship between the sense of political identity imposed by racism on the American black and the sense of genetic identity with Africa is minimal in its intellectual dignity. *Roots* is the record of the voluntary location of an individual in the context of the past. Haley may have intended to make the justification of Afro-America the locus of his effort; he has succeeded, in spite of his intentions and his personal reticence, in making himself, as an individual, vital to the book's meanings. The peculiar essence of *Roots* is that the author, prostrating himself before the past, is himself called upon to justify his existence before the power of history and the court of the past, just as every twig on every branch on every tree must justify itself to its soiled roots. And it is this test of the individual life before the sacrifices and disasters of a common ancestry that Haley passes most movingly. In the display of intelligence, industry and humanity out of which the substance of the book evolves—its limitations as fiction are really insignificant in comparison—one finds preserved not pride of family or race or a smattering of heirloomed words but those qualities of spirit that, as Kunte Kinte knew in preferring mutilation to servility, make freedom not a privilege but a necessity. When Haley stands at the end of *Roots* before his African country-cousins and feels himself "impure" because of their richly black skin, there is behind the tedious racial romanticism the felt truth of a confrontation between the individual and his—and in this case—personified past. Haley has nothing to be ashamed of, at least not in

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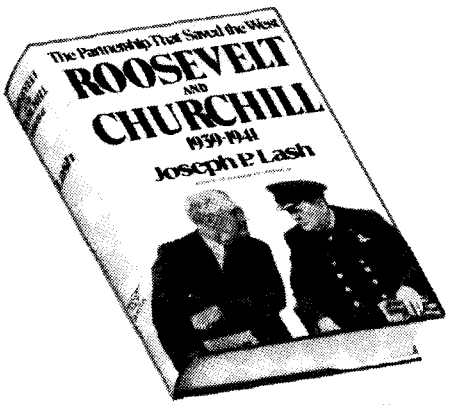

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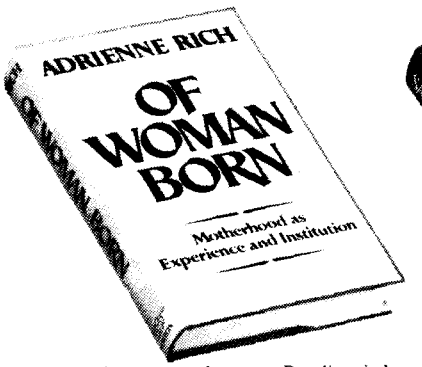

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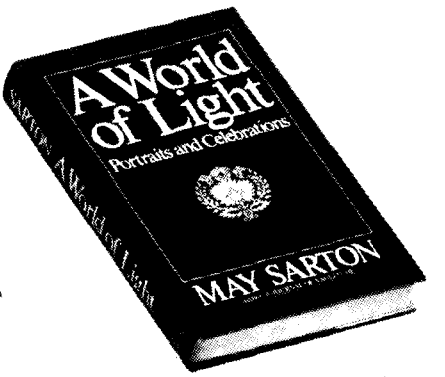

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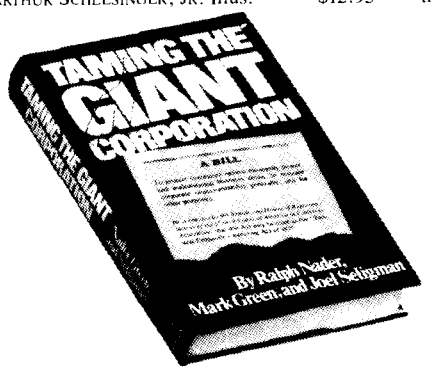

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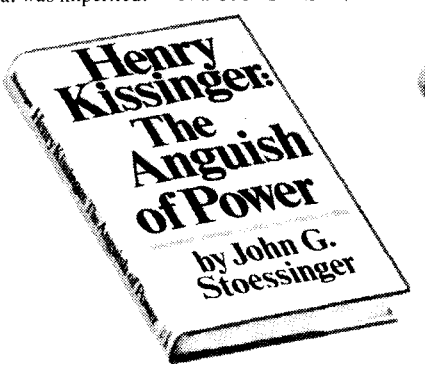

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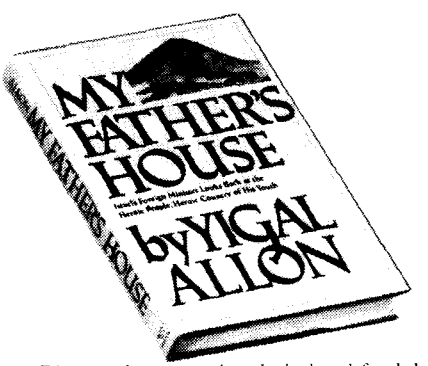

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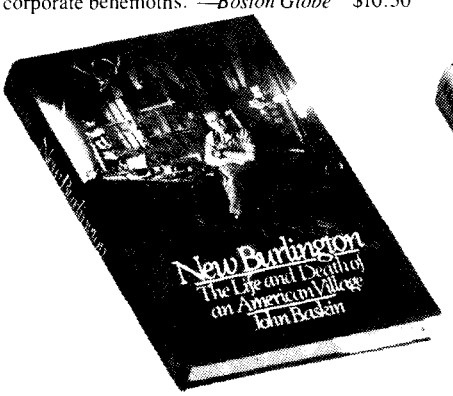

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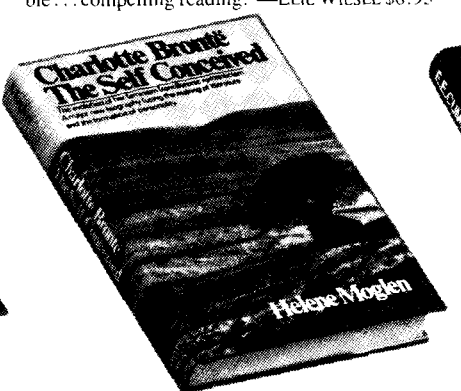

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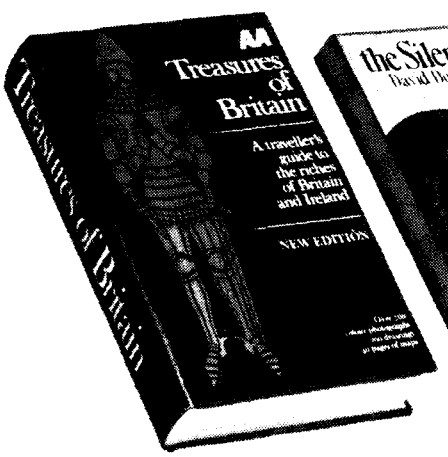

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this book; Kunte Kinte would have respected him.

One splendid extra dimension of *Roots* is that it may find a grateful and congenial audience among the young; certainly it might be abridged at once and prepared in a high-school edition. This judgment is denigration only in the minds of those who do not understand the crucial significance of what young people read, or the near-total absence of books written by blacks either for the literate young or capable of conversion to satisfy their needs. Here, certainly for black youth, hopefully for all American youth, as for the general reader, is an honest, inspired version of the central story of the nation's ailing heart.

Arnold Rampersad

Arnold Rampersad teaches English at Stanford, and is author of *The Art and Imagination of W.E.B. Du Bois* (Harvard Univ. Press).

The Black Family In Slavery & Freedom 1750-1925 by Herbert Gutman

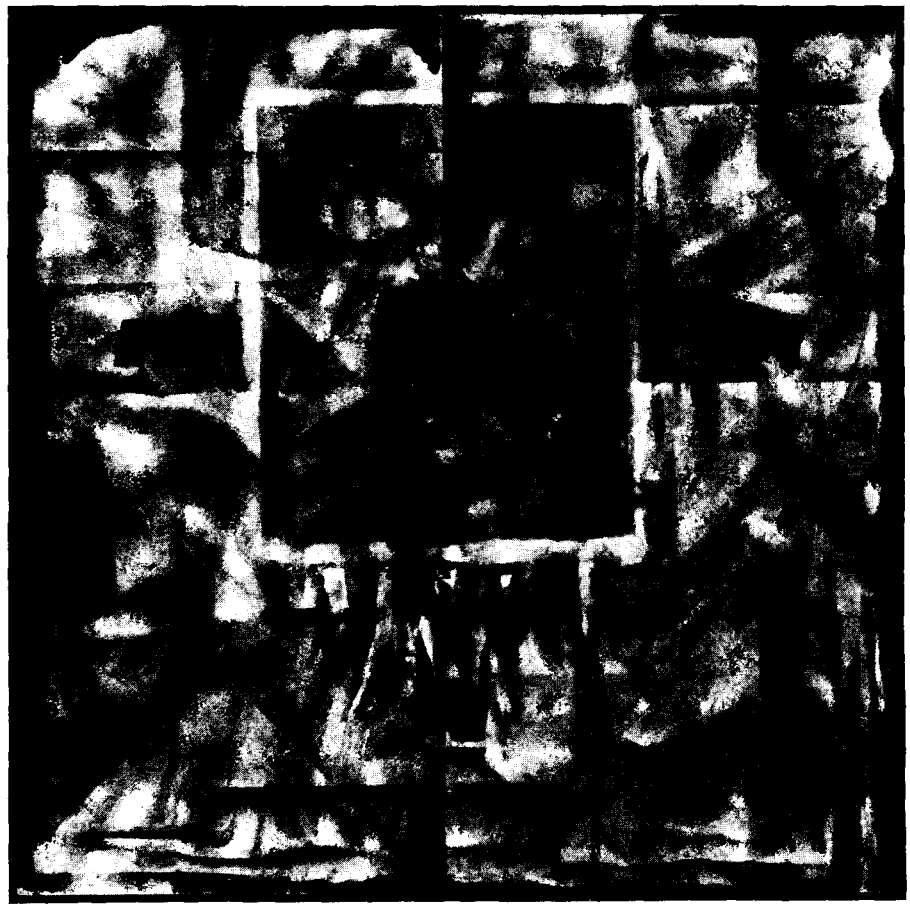
(Pantheon; $15.95)

Thomas Jefferson's slave and son, Madison Hemings, remembered that his grandmother "had seven children by white men and seven by colored men—14 in all." Was Hemings' grandmother a typical slave? Were slaves, as most Americans believe, promiscuous? Black families unstable? Matriarchal? The black sociologist E. Franklin Frazier argued persuasively in his 1939 classic *The Negro Family in the United States* that the black family was dominated by females and was unstable. Writing in 1965 Daniel Moynihan echoed Frazier's views and asserted that the pathology afflicting the black family was one of the legacies of slavery. Scholars have long debated the Frazier-Moynihan thesis. The black historian Carter G. Woodson launched the most successful attack in the 1940s when he published lengthy histories of several black families in the *Negro History Bulletin*. Still, the myths endured. One deleterious effect of them was that very few blacks showed any interest in genealogy. (The publication of Alex Haley's fascinating family history, *Roots*, may indicate a reversal of the trend.)

The year 1976 may mark the beginning of a new era in the study of black institutions. The appearance of Herbert Gutman's 664-page volume, *The Black Family In Slavery & Freedom, 1750-1925*, breaks sharply with tradition. Bombarding the reader with a constant stream of statistics and 106 tables and charts, Gutman has mounted a massive attack on the popular myths about the historically weak black family. Slaves, according to Gutman, placed a high value on the family in spite of the lack of interest shown by plantation owners in preserving the institution. The blacks had an explicit awareness of kinship ties: children were named after blood kin, and cousins were included in the incest taboo. Even when separated by frequent sales, the slaves maintained a sense of family. Much of the mobility of blacks after the Civil War was a result of efforts of individual blacks to find wives, husbands and children separated from them in the antebellum period. The blacks transformed kin obligations into communal care for orphans (voluntarily by individuals and in institutions supported by blacks); they had great respect for elders, and they used kin titles ("uncle," "aunt") as terms of respect for non-relatives.

During and immediately after the Civil War blacks showed a strong desire to legalize marriage. Thousands of them went to US Army and Freedmens Bureau posts and to county clerks to register marriages which had begun in slavery. According to Gutman, this indicated that "the slaves had created and sustained very important familial and kin sensibilities and ties. The choices so many made immediately upon their emancipation and before they had substantive rights in the law did not result from new ideas learned in freedom and were not the reflection of beliefs learned from owners. Such behavior had its origins in the ways in which Africans and their Afro-American descendants had adapted to enslavement."

Turning to the federal censuses of 1880 and 1900, Gutman found that an overwhelming majority of the black families in all the southern communities he studied were headed by males. The census of New York in 1905 and 1925 demonstrated that the family survived migration and thrived in an urban environment. Although comparing unfavorably in some ways to Italian and Jewish immigrants, the black family was headed by males (83 percent in 1905). In an "afterword," focusing on the black family in the 1960s, Gutman, (like



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Frazier) blames contemporary family disorganization on economic discrimination, black unemployment and underemployment.

Americans are generally so impressed by statistics and studies based on them it is necessary to place this important study in a contemporary framework. Given Gutman's contentions, one is hard pressed to explain why only 63.9 percent of all black families and only 49.5 percent of all black households were headed by males in 1974. Was the legacy of slavery as positive as Gutman infers from his statistics? The methodological shortcomings of *Black Family* make it impossible to answer the question affirmatively. Gutman makes no systematic attempt to follow individual families from one census to another. With the exception of New York City, he does not compile statistics for the same place over an extended period of time.

To his credit, the author does not contend that the slave family was stable, and gives a few statistics on the forced separation of mates. Still, one feels the need for more. How did estate sales affect the slave family? While describing interracial sex and its impact on the black family during the Civil War, the author gives us little information on the sexual exploitation of the slave women by whites. *Black Family* is a lengthy description of a number of statistical indices of black family life in specific places at specific times between 1750 and 1925. It contains little on the dynamics of family life. We do not learn who exercised authority or what child rearing practices prevailed.

Where can we discover the roots of the strong sense of family possessed by blacks in the 19th century? Was it an African survival or an outgrowth of lessons learned from whites with whom the blacks interacted for centuries? Drawing incorrect inferences from his data and failing to recognize inherent limitations, Gutman argues that the family patterns emerging in the quarters owed little to whites. Yet, he contends that the African influence (especially in naming practices) disappeared at an early date. Contrary to Gutman's assertions, thousands of plantation diaries testify to the influence exercised by whites on slave marriage and family life. Antebellum white ministers regularly preached to black congregations about family obligations, and thousand of slaves were married in white churches. While giving due recognition to the resilience of the slaves, one should not forget that they lived in close contact with whites. The African became an Afro-American, partially because he borrowed from whites. This process was no less true in the family than it was in the church. Occasionally Gutman seems so blinded by his debate with Frazier and Moynihan that he plays word games to gain the upper hand. There is little difference, it seems to me, between the "prenuptial intercourse" and "bridal pregnancy" Gutman says were norms among slaves and what Frazier described as slave licentiousness. Nineteenth-century clerics had the best of both worlds when they described such practices as "ante-nuptial fornication."

Gutman's long discussion of the choice of surnames by slaves and ex-slaves is somewhat confusing. After the Civil War most former slaves refused to adopt the surname of their last owner. But, having long since forgotten their African names, they frequently chose the name of the white owning the first member of their family. In other words, the slaves had maintained their own Anglo-American surnames in spite of being held successively by many owners. None of Gutman's statistics explain why blacks chose one surname over another.

Most of the shortcomings in Gutman's discussion of the slave family are a result of his failure to place the family within the context of the total culture. Remarkably, he devotes only two pages to slave courtship patterns. Little effort is made to mine the rich store of slave secular songs, spirituals and folklore for indications of beliefs about the family in

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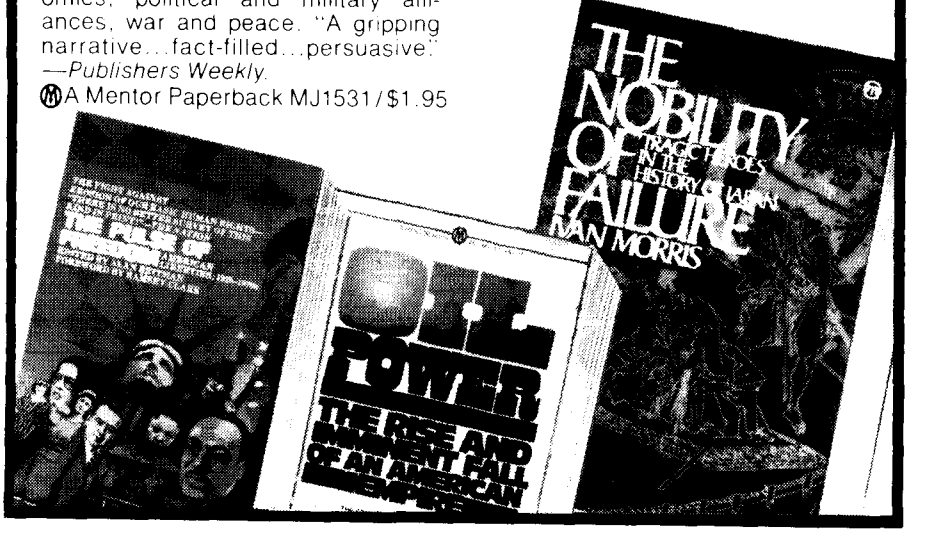
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the black community. Long on description and short on explanation, *Black Family* suffers from the failure of the author to study specific literary and statistical sources in tandem. The plantation registers of Thomas Jefferson, for instance, could have been studied in conjunction with the interviews of several of his slaves. Neither did Gutman make an examination of the numerous autobiographies published by blacks who lived in New York City before 1925. These failures notwithstanding, *Black Family* is a significant addition to the growing list of sensitive and sophisticated studies of Afro-American institutions.

John W. Blassingame

John W. Blassingame is professor of history at Yale and editor of The Frederick Douglass Papers.

This Species of Property
by Leslie Howard Owens

(Oxford; $12.95)

Clearly no single area in the American past has received more attention, aroused more passions, and generated more debate and controversy among serious scholars in recent years than Afro-American slavery. John Blassingame (*The Slave Community*), George Rawick (*From Sundown to Sunup*), Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman, (*Time on the Cross*), Eugene Genovese (*Roll, Jordan, Roll*) and now Leslie Howard Owens are chief among those writers who claim to set the record of slavery straight by "telling it like it was." The major problem for the non-historian, however, is that in attempting to "tell it like it was" each author has told something that is often inconsistent and strikingly different from what the others have said. Yet all have been provocative and have raised penetrating questions, though many of their conclusions are often unconvincing; this book is no exception.

This Species of Property concerns itself primarily with the highly charged issues of slave personality, slave behavior and the slaves' view of the institution of slavery. Based on an exhaustive and rather innovative use of plantation records, ex-slave narratives and memoirs among numerous other primary and secondary source materials, Owens supplies another rung in the

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ladder constructed and raised by Blassingame and Rawick which leads to the view that the slaves' major source of inspiration, values, customs, traditions and beliefs came from their fellow slaves, the slave community, and not from the slaveowners. Although assiduously and painstakingly researched with attention to detail omnipresent, Owens' book, though generally excellent, does not introduce a lot in the way of new information or insights into slavery. Many of his conclusions on slave resistance, the slave family, slave culture, slave labor and the slave quarters have been advanced recently by others. However, from a methodological point of view, Owens' *This Species of Property* is a major work because of its unprecedented use of plantation records to augment ex-slave autobiographies and narratives in presenting an "inside out" or slaves' view of slavery. Some 20 years earlier Kenneth Stampp's *magnum opus, The Peculiar Institution*, used the same plantation records, but neglecting to couple them with a generous helping of slave based sources, only an "outside-in" or white slaveholders' view of slavery was provided.

Slaves, Owens insists, were not, for the most part, docile and childlike in personality and "true" behavior. They were clever, cunning and well aware of the need when around masters to affect personality and behavior patterns that they, the slaves, felt the masters wanted them to possess. The pressures of life in bondage, to be sure, bore down with force but not nearly crushing enough to destroy the self concepts, cultural traditions and values nurtured and developed in the slave quarters. Even the slave trade which drove blood relatives apart did not warp personality and behavior patterns as slaves frequently adjusted by reorganizing themselves when necessary in extended family groupings which provided many of the emotional needs that regular families have traditionally provided.

The most difficult assignments for slaves, contrary to popular notions, were the positions of house slaves, slave drivers and similar roles. Many of these slaves, in fact, could not properly perform such assignments as their sympathies were too strongly connected with the slave community. Others tried and some played the role until the role in many instances became a part of their personality and behavior patterns. Still, there was a large number of privileged slaves whose close associations with field slaves made their work difficult to perform and as Owens suggests, these associations often led to their being demoted to field hand status. Thus, Owens shows, as others have before, that often the "real" allegiance of privileged slaves went to the slave quarters. One wishes, however, for studies dealing with frequency rates of such demotions before reaching any definitive conclusions in this area.

Wanted Poster Series #9, Charles White. *Courtesy Forum Gallery.*

Probably the most original contribution of this book is in its analysis of the role of diet and disease on slave personality and behavior. Sickness and disease proved formidable obstacles for the health of the slave and the smooth running of the plantation. Both were frequent as slave labor was often physically demanding and slave diets were often nutritionally deficient. Owens, through juxtapositions of what slaves were fed with what labor loads required and comparing this with symptoms of sickness as described by planters, has diagnosed many of the diseases and sicknesses that affected slaves. This pioneering technique employed by Owens deserves praise even though his conclusions are the most suspect of the study.

Slave personality and behavior, Owens maintains, were often the result of inadequate diets. Docile and childlike behavior, he continues, could often be explained with the saying "you are what you eat." Undoubtedly a number of slaves were weakened physically and mentally through years of poor diets and back-breaking labor. But to say anything more, Owens should have sought frequency rates to demonstrate the relationship between diet and behavior. In other words, we need to know how widespread was the relationship between docility and poor diets, and most importantly, when both were possibly "real" and possibly "alleged." By blindly accepting the notion gained through plantation records that slaves generally ate only what the planters gave them and concluding that such rations were detrimental influences on personality and behavior, Owens has seriously underestimated the very same cleverness and cunningness that he attaches to slaves in explaining their ability to cope with slavery. What about groundhogs, squirrels, rabbits and possums in the area of meats that slaves were able to catch on their own? What about pork salad, blackberries and other wild vegetables that slaves were able to pick on their own? Also, what about the food that slaves stole or were given by those very same house slaves who, when caught, faced the prospects of being demoted to field hand status? In brief, much more evidence is needed to prove that to any appreciable degree indirect relationships existed between apparent signs of docile and childlike behavior and slave diets.

Still, *This Species of Property* establishes Leslie Howard Owens as a major historian of Afro-American slavery. He has fully earned for himself a historiographical seat on the bandwagon of those who insist that there existed a viable slave community. His book ranks among the best written in the last decade. Now perhaps historians will stop haggling over the existence or non-existence of a viable slave community, and instead start with the degree of autonomy that the community could maintain in the teeth of planter power and coercion. The first to do this, I suspect, will come close to "telling it like it was" for good.

Al-Tony Gilmore

Al-Tony Gilmore is director of Afro-American Studies at the University of Maryland, and author of *Bad Nigger! The National Impact of Jack Johnson* (Kennikat Press).

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Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind" Letters, 1936-1949 ed. by Richard Harwell

(Macmillian; $12.95)

Gone with the Wind remains remarkable among best-selling novels in that after its immediate vogue expired, it did not disappear into oblivion. Margaret Mitchell's historical romance has survived its occasion, and 40 years afterward is not only still in print and selling well, but even beginning to receive some respectable critical attention.

Clearly *GWTW* is qualitatively a thing apart from the customary bestseller; it appeals not only to the general reading public's desire for novelty, sentimentality, titillation and a fast-paced story, but speaks to some of that public's deeper emotional needs.

The letters written by Margaret Mitchell following her novel's acceptance by the Macmillian Company have now been ably edited by Richard Harwell. The woman who wrote these letters, and who not only never wrote another novel but apparantly never even seriously considered doing so, was a remarkable lady and clearly no literary hack.

She had no formidable amount of literary taste. Her idea of good reading was the fiction of Mary Johnston, Kenneth Roberts, Booth Tarkington and Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings. She just couldn't read *War and Peace* and the other Russian novels, she kept insisting. Nor does she ever in this correspondence demonstrate much interest in the better work of her own day. In 1936, for example, she asked Hershel Brickell to send her his review of William Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*; she wasn't going to have time to read it herself, she explained. She appears to have had little or no interest in matters of literary technique or in theory of any sort. Her chief appetite was for detective mysteries and for Southern history, particularly that of the Civil War era, and yet she displays no curiosity about *why* historical events happened, or indeed in the larger patterns of which the specific events were a part.

What she did have was a passion for the past of the city of Atlanta and the region around it, and apparently it never occurred to her that re-creating the past involved anything more than getting the facts right and keeping out anachronisms—she worked with great care to insure that. What she thought and felt in her time, she believed, would be exactly what Georgians of the 1860s would have thought and felt; she assumed a continuity of attitude and loyalties that were not in any important way affected by 75 years of moral, political, economic and social change.

In some respects she was quite right. Her conscious attitudes in such matters as North versus South, civil rights, the social scene, community identity and individual role within the community, differ but little from those of the time about which she wrote. Puzzled at criticism of the depiction of blacks in her novel, she wrote that "the colored people I know here in Atlanta had nothing but nice things to say, especially the older ones. . . ." That she was sincere is beyond doubt; that she mirrored the attitudes of the "best people" of her community is undeniable. The year 1936 was not the year 1976.

But neither was it 1865, and though in that particular respect she did not see the difference, in other, and for her purposes more important, respects, Margaret Mitchell was, perhaps without entirely realizing it, very much a modern woman and no Southern lady of the mid-19th century. Like her protagonist Scarlett O'Hara, though in much more complex and attractive fashion, she had a strong ambition to succeed, an instinctive skill at using her position to great advantage, a shrewd tenacity in getting what she wanted.

What she seems to have wanted most was to be popular and respected in Atlanta, to appear to be the gentlewoman who wrote rather than the professional author. The skill with which she handled herself during the production of the movie of *GWTW* so as to avoid any criticism that might be made by her fellow Southerners while yet seeing that things were done in proper fashion, was masterful. Her management of lawsuits, her handling of book rights, her smooth-as-silk insistence upon doing what she wished to do and not doing what she didn't wish to do: these come through clearly in the correspondence.

Her letters are clearly not those of a woman who was spontaneously "conversing on paper"; every sentence and phrase was weighed with calculation, with great concern for how what she was writing would be received. She was a most private person; "what was she actually thinking, behind such control?" one finds oneself asking again and again.

The whole is really—and I intend this in no invidious sense—quite a performance, and makes one realize just how much of herself Margaret Mitchell got into the characterization of Scarlett O'Hara. And it is precisely Scarlett the modern, the resolute realist who despised cant, for whom the War and Reconstruction were not defeat and disaster but actually a liberation from the role of Southern Lady that for her was as constricting as the stays she had to be laced into at Tara—it is this woman who gives *Gone with the Wind*, for all the costume romance, melodrama, and myth-as-history, its psychological authenticity and strength. What Scarlett meant for a Great Depression generation, and still means, is the necessity of choosing life over charades, the knowledge that, as she herself put it, "you can't be a lady without money." Mitchell punished her for thinking and acting accordingly by taking Rhett Butler away from her at the end, but she admired and understood her.

Margaret Mitchell's creative will thus won out over lack of literary taste, shortcomings of historical understanding, a penchant for melodrama, to produce a novel that seems destined to last. This well-chosen selection of letters will, I think, show something of the lady's mettle.

Louis D. Rubin, Jr.

Louis D. Rubin, Jr. is Distinguished Professor of English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His most recent book is *William Elliott Shoots a Bear—Essays on the Southern Literary Imagination* (Louisiana State Univ. Press).

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Reconsideration

Harlem Gallery by Melvin Tolson

(Twayne, 1971; $6; Collier Books, 1969; $1.50, paper)

It took Melvin Tolson a long time to write *Harlem Gallery*, largely because his life was full to overflowing with things to do other than the writing of poetry, but also because *Harlem Gallery* was possible for him only after he had spent a quarter of a century, and more, changing the way he wrote. For, although Tolson was not an artist in an ivory tower in the sense of scorning life, he was dedicated to the refinement of his own mastery of poetry. He worked hard, and with signal success, at being a good husband and father. Few college teachers have ever given of themselves so abundantly to their students. And Tolson was very sincerely the concerned public man who both dreamed and worked to bring about an ideal social order. Far back, before World War II, when a Negro in the Deep South still might be taking his life in his hands whenever he violated the taboos imposed on him by whites, Tolson was stealing away from the campus in Texas where he taught to speak to groups of black and white sharecroppers whom the unions hoped to organize interracially. Even so, there were always hours in the day, usually late at night or early in the morning, when Tolson did withdraw into an ivory tower, and turn himself exclusively to the study of other poets and to his own writing.

Tolson's life began in 1900. His father, like his grandfather and great-grandfather, was a Methodist minister. Growing up, Tolson was shuttled from little town to little town in Missouri and Iowa. But he did stay in Kansas City long enough to go through high school there. He earned his bachelor's degree from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, the all-male oldest institution of higher learning in America for Negroes. He captained both his high school and college football teams.

In all that he espoused Tolson placed a premium upon catholicity. He once claimed, justifiably, that he was a part of all that he had met, and then was able to recall himself as a shoeshine boy, stevedore, soldier, janitor, packing-house worker, cook on a railroad, waiter in beach-front hotels, boxer, actor, football coach, director of drama, lecturer for the NAACP, an organizer of sharecroppers' unions, a teacher, poet laureate of a foreign country (Liberia), painter, newspaper columnist, four-time mayor of a town, and a facer of mobs. He could have added that he was indefatigible. Poetry meant for him constant calisthenics in the techniques of making verse. But it meant also an avid interest in every form of experience. It meant, therefore, that he was an apostle of blackness, that he believed in Negroes, and that he considered himself a poet of the race to which he belonged, since it meant ultimately that he saw Negroes only as an important element in a greater whole. Tolson accepted the brotherhood of man and the universality of serious art.

The title of *Harlem Gallery*, however, is not a misnomer. The brotherhood of man and the universality of serious art do catalyze its perceptions. Nevertheless, *Harlem Gallery* is a black man's poem about black people in a black community. All of its characters, including the Curator with his "afroirishjewish ancestry," live in Harlem. There is much talk in *Harlem Gallery*, a talky poem, about the great imponderables such as life and art. But all of the talk is Negro talk in a Negro setting. While Tolson relishes, and exploits, the local and the particular, his eye is repeatedly on what might be called the universal. He gives no quarter to the strange belief that only whites can speak for, and to, everyone. The people in *Harlem Gallery* live segregated lives. They do not limit themselves, as a result, to segregated thoughts.

Tolson has testified that *Harlem Gallery* began as a sonnet in 1930. From there, in the early 1930s, it became a manuscript of 340 pages of free verse, modeled after Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*, owing much to Browning's psychologizing and Whitman's exuberance, entitled *A Gallery of Harlem Portraits* and destined, after submission to the New York market, not to find a publisher. In the 1950s Tolson revised the old *Gallery* into what was finally published as *Harlem Gallery* in 1965. Literally then, *Harlem Gallery* is the work of a lifetime. The characters in it—Dr. Nkomo, the Bantu expatriate; the anonymous Curator himself; the poet, Hideho Heights; Mr. Guy Delaporte III, his mistress, Black Orchid; the sportswriter, Vincent Aveline; Snakehips Briskie, the twister; Mister Starks, whose Christian name is Mister so that whites cannot call him boy; the blind painter, John Laugart; and others—are distilled from Tolson's experience. But the poetic conventions in *Harlem Gallery* come largely from the intense study of other poets. Neither experience is exclusively black or white. The *ethos* of the poem is anything but separatist.

Whether or not its *ethos* will be its undoing remains to be seen. While Tolson was writing *Harlem Gallery* a new social gospel was being promulgated around him. Tolson had not found his respect and affection for his own race incompatible with a commitment to integration. Some later black poets and critics did, and they questioned *Harlem Gallery*. Moreover, *Harlem Gallery* can be difficult to read. Much of its syntax is involved. Its frequent plays on words can seem highly cabalistic. And the poem never seems, sometimes maddeningly, to come right out and say what it has to say.

Nevertheless *Harlem Gallery* is a fine product of the imagination. Tolson denominated the part which he did live to publish, "Book One, The Curator," and called it an autobio-fragment. He projected, incidentally, four other parts, each, presumably, as considerable as Book One. But into his autobio-fragment he poured a sense of reality that was anything but fragmentary. He achieved a memorable presentation of the human comedy and of human values.

Blyden Jackson

Blyden Jackson is author of *The Waiting Years: Essays on American Negro Literature* (Louisiana State Univ. Press).

The Back of the Book

Means of Identification

Writers are the most important people on earth, so their every wish should be granted. Editors are low-life, however, and like to make work intolerable for writers, except in one area—the

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author's identification at the end of an article. Brawl and haggle elsewhere, there, in those few telling lines, is usually serene agreement: *William Wilson is professor of anthropology at the University of Hawaii, and is currently at work on a biography of Don Ho.*

But what does one learn from such identifications? That the writer holds down a job, finally; that the writer writes books; sometimes that the writer wins prizes. Or, modestly, that the writer has a place to hang his hat: *William Wilson is a free-lance writer living in Perth Amboy, New Jersey.* How do we picture Mr. Wilson, free lancing through Perth Amboy? A name in the phone book, should you need a free lance in the middle of the night. Or overmodestly: *Mr. Baldwin lives outside Paris.*

The New Republic, as you know, usually identifies its authors by job and book. Not all publications are so dull: *William Wilson is a free-lance anthropologist living in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, with his second wife, Ariadne, and a cat named "Pumpkin." Articles of his have appeared in* The National Geographic, Ms. *and elsewhere. He concurrently holds fellowships from the Guggenheim and Rockefeller Foundations, and plans a summer in Provincetown, Mass.* Such descriptions are supposed to convey a fuller life; yet even at their lengths what do we know of the writer? An address for crank letters perhaps; but credentials, authority?

Authority is what is supposed to be established in these blurbs. Mr. Wilson's word on the new Trollope biography is to be trusted because Mr. Wilson has written (is writing) a Trollope biography himself—fine logic. Common sense suggests that Mr. Wilson's authority resides in his willingness to mow down competitors. Yet he has competence in the field. You wouldn't want a know-nothing to review your book. *William Wilson is an actuary in St. Louis who stumbled upon this book. He got interested in it, and wrote this review.* In fact, that might not be a bad idea—the authority of general intelligence.

Even from the perspective of authority, however, no matter how derived, these identifications are odd, and the longer the odder. For they don't really increase one's respect for the writer's opinions as much as telling us that he has a life history outside the exercise at hand. Since authors' identifications are usually written by the authors themselves, they may be intended as public reminders of how far the writer has come or how varied are his abilities—minor emblems of progress and career. It is as if, even in this, we become biographical entries, the coherence of our lives made demonstrable solely on professional milestones. Blurbs compete with the piece itself for the readers' attention: the invention of a people accustomed to seeing themselves from a bureaucratic perch. What meditations, self-scrutinies go into these descriptions?

Samuel Johnson never had such trouble. Neither did Keats: *Mr. Keats is a medical student, and is at work on a long mythical poem.* No one even signed his work in the 16th and 17th centuries; only when literature became a commodity did names appear, and until the mid-20th century a mere name was enough (the *New Yorker* practice now). The rest of us live in an age of "who do you think you are?", the author's identification serving as both tribute and self-defense.

Yet it gives so little of either that it might be better to settle on other criteria. Physical description, in case you see the writer in a café: *William Wilson is 6'9", has blue hair and smokes like a chimney.* Or temperament: *If the Giants lose, don't start up with William Wilson.* Or precision: *Here is Mr. Wilson's thumb print.* One could incorporate the identification into the article itself: *As I told my second wife Ariadne the other day, life in Perth Amboy isn't what is used to be, not for anthropologists.* Maybe one should make a puzzle: *Can you guess who wrote this article?*

What if we got personal with these blurbs: *William Wilson is going to pieces.* Or intriguing: *William Wilson is the pseudonym of a famous missing judge.* Or collegiate: Is there a William Wilson? Or forward-looking: *Mr. Wilson is going to injure someone close to him shortly.*

There *is* a kind of method in the present system. If you see that William Wilson *teaches* English at Fresno State, you may conclude that he doesn't have tenure yet, but is seeking it, and is politic and diffident enough to identify himself as "teacher," a toiler in the vineyard. If you see that Wilson is *professor* of English at Fresno, conclude either that he is or seeks to be; and if it's the latter, you may also conclude that his senior colleagues will see that he never makes it. The phrase, "most recent book," may mean last spring or 1912.

Reference to a work in progress can mean almost anything. *William Wilson is completing a study of Henry James*—that is, Wilson has not yet written a word, or he has had that manuscript lying around the attic for two years without a bite. The general effect is to suggest that Wilson doesn't stop working; an article here, a book there. Many writers are fond of listing the other publications for which they have written, perhaps to tell the reader that he's dealing with a pro; or the editor that Wilson doesn't need *him*, not Wilson. *William Wilson covers the contemporary art scene* means that this is his first published piece. *William Wilson is a philosopher* means that he recently has been fired from CUNY.

That's about as far as it goes. No one as yet has resolved this issue, which as issues go is small potatoes. Perhaps the London *Times Literary Supplement* was right in its former practice of omitting names altogether. Anonymity gives writers more authority than a *curriculum vitae*, though it can also protect the undeserving. Still, there's something awkward in the current practice, and even restricting in the sense that articles themselves carry more or less authority than the author's identification. On yet another hand, nothing bears more weight than a picture; every half-witted critic on television becomes acceptable on sight.

Since pictures are impractical, and since the other pros and cons factor out, William Wilson will continue to be identified by the usual things. But it ought to be acknowledged that his self-description, like his self-esteem, is both more elaborate and shaky than it used to be, and as the century crawls on may yet become so overblown as to serve as a miniature autobiography, an instance of which is his current article. When that happens, we will have come full circle from the 18th century when people used to sign false names to poems so that the public could speculate feverishly on who wrote what. There will be no question as to who wrote what, because no one will care.

Roger Rosenblatt

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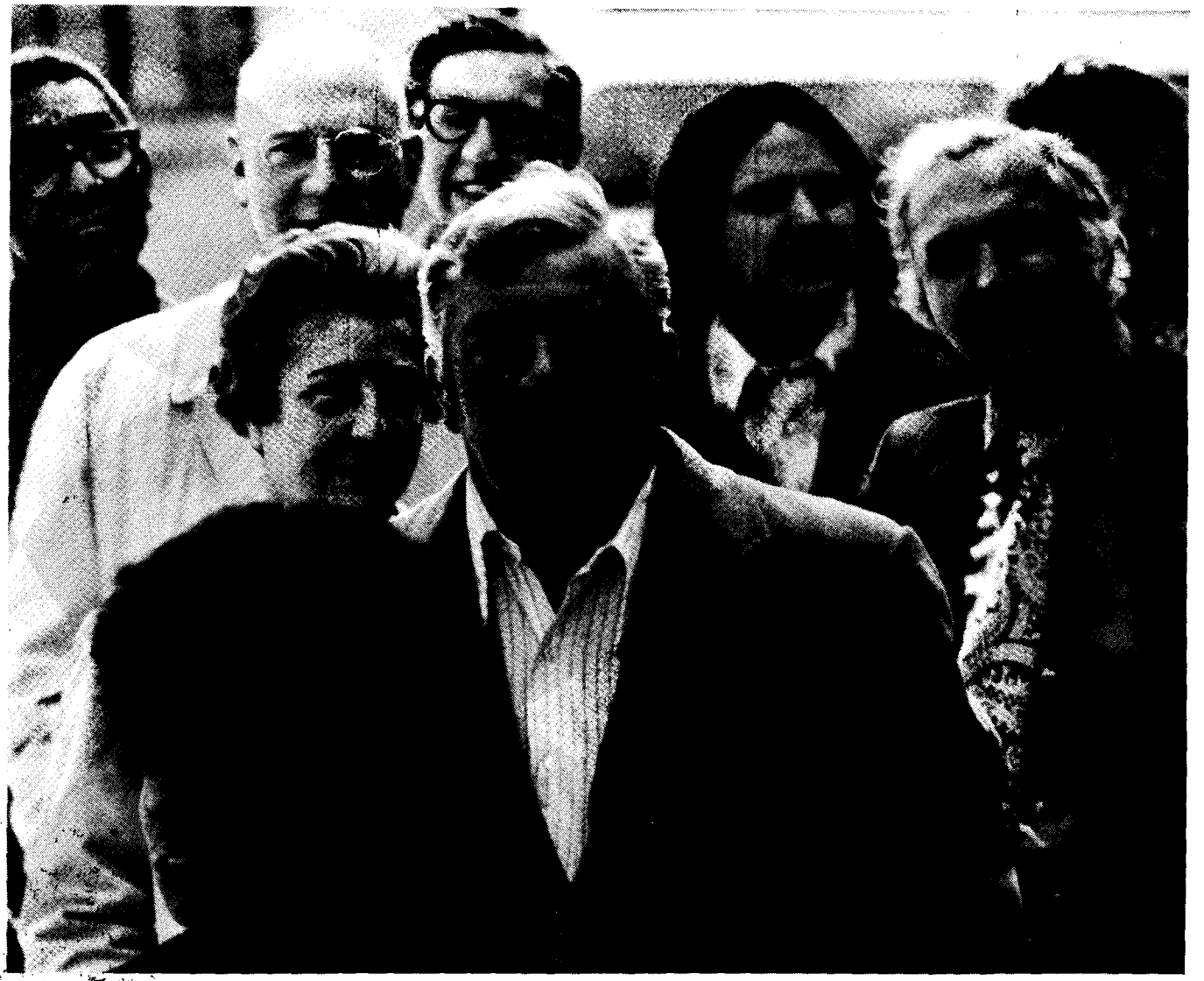

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